Valley Voice

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CEMEX Fights For Its Life

Catherine Doe

CEMEX is fighting on two fronts to continue mining in Tulare County. The first front is defending itself against allegations that it violated its conditional use permit. If found guilty, the company could lose its permit to mine gravel at Stillwell Mine in Lemon Cove.

On the second front, it is in danger of the Tulare County Board of Supervisors (TCBOS) declaring Stillwell Mine abandoned. CEMEX' Stillwell Mine has been out of production for more than the allotted time allowed by its permit, and its consultants submitted a deficient Interim Management Plan (IMP) that was initially rejected by the Resource Management Agency (RMA). CEMEX has 30 days from the rejection letter to respond.

Public Hearing on Permit Violations

A public hearing will be held by the Tulare County Planning Commission in early December to address possible violations of CEMEX' permit. Public response was to be submitted by September 30, and the hearing to take place no later than November, but it was delayed due to a request from CEMEX to collect more data. Public comment on all issues related to the Stillwell Mine and the Lemon Cove Facility, both operated by CEMEX, were accepted until October 31 and included in the peer review currently being put together by RMA Director Mike Spata.

CEMEX requested more time to collect the information being recorded on the dataloggers placed in domestic wells that line the east side of the Stillwell Mine. The dataloggers track the depth and quality of the groundwater in domestic wells around the mine. Residential wells began going dry late last year, when, in violation of their mining permit, CEMEX stopped pumping water from their ponds into the recharge or V-trench. Farmers who live near the Lemon Cove Facility, about a mile away, are having similar problems with their wells and struggle to irrigate their citrus groves.

Condition number 49 of CEMEX' mining permit states that, "The project

CEMEX continued on **9 »**

Panasonic-Coronal Solar PV Plant in Farmersville

Panasonic and Coronal Group Complete Solar Projects

Staff Reports

Panasonic Enterprise Solutions Company (Panasonic) and Coronal Group LLC (Coronal) announced the completion last month of their ninth solar project in Tulare and Kings Counties. The projects provide 16.2 megawatts (MW) of energy to Southern California Edison's grid to power approximately 14,500 homes annually.

The solar projects include two in Tulare, three in Farmersville, two in Hanford and two in Porterville.

"Significant solar projects are beneficial to the economy and how we produce and consume energy, but their financial and structural complexities are a big challenge for companies interested in adopting clean, sustainable energy," said Panasonic Eco Solutions Managing Director Jamie Evans. "The Panasonic-Coronal platform is a proven integrated business model that removes those obstacles, and helps to deliver affordable, reliable, clean energy."

Panasonic and Coronal acquired the California Renewable Energy Small Tariff projects from Macquarie Capital in 2013. A $50 million funding commitment by Ullico Inc., a labor union-owned insurance and investment company, also contributed to the acquisition and completion of the projects. The projects were built by Panasonic and ImMODO Energy Services Corporation.

"The completion of these nine projects, the first commercial projects to be finished under the Panasonic-Coronal platform, marks an important milestone and there are more in the pipeline," said Jonathan Jaffrey, CEO of Coronal. "Our total joint project development with Panasonic, now more than 100 MWs, is an indicator of both the success of our platform and the rising interest in solar projects."

"We are delighted with the successful completion of these Central California projects and look forward to

SOLAR continued on **6 »**

Political Fix

Catherine Doe

Jason Cosgrove, Junrel Sumagang, Devon Mathis, Cole Azare, Nick Miller

Mathis Over Mendoza in Assembly District 26

Election Day brought Tulare County something of a surprise, as Devon Mathis soundly defeated Rudy Mendoza in the race for State Assembly District 26. At press time, all incumbents were on their way to victory.

Record low voter turnout for the midterms was predicted for several reasons, but four major factors affected turnout and thus the outcomes: the fact that this is not a presidential election; the governor's race is a blowout; no senators are up for reelection; and none of the propositions are wedge issues.

So who voted? According to a seasoned campaign consultant, voter turnout models are out the window. John Ellis of the *Fresno Bee* said, "While every election is different, this one could be a true outlier." He went on to say that it is uncertain who will vote, how many will vote or why they will be motivated to vote."

Voter turnout in the last midterm general election in California, in 2010, was—according to the *Huffington Post*—33.3%.

Here is a look at some of Tuesday's results at press time.

We can sum up the statewide races succinctly--the Democrats made a clean sweep. No Republican has won a statewide office in California since Steve Poisner, in 2006, for insurance commissioner. The only two races that garnered any interest during the current cycle were for state controller and secretary of state. Although Republicans Pete Peterson and Ashley Swearengin won the endorsement of every major California newspaper except one, both were losing close races at press time to their Democratic competitors.

In a recent article profiling Mr. Peterson in the *Visalia Times-Delta* he said, "Nobody like me has ever run for this office, a non-politician whose background is in finding ways to engage the public…Somebody like Alex has always run for this office."

POLITICAL FIX continued on **3 »**

Tulare County Health Officials Ready for Ebola

Steve Pastis

Ebola is a rare and deadly disease first reported in 1976 in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Its symptoms, which include fever, severe headache, muscle pain, weakness, diarrhea, vomiting, abdominal pain and unexplained bleeding or bruising, may appear anywhere from 2 to 21 days after exposure to the virus. The disease is often fatal, especially if untreated.

So far, Ebola cases have been extremely rare in the U.S., with none reported in California. Even so, Tulare County health officials and care providers have been working to be prepared… just in case.

"We've prepared as if it's a certainty," said Lindsay Mann, CEO of the Kaweah Delta Health Care District. "If we have a case here, we're ready."

"Kaweah Delta Medical Center has been updating staff regularly on the outbreak and recently re-evaluated readiness for handling patients with Ebola," reported Daniel Boken, M.D., medical director of infectious diseases at Kaweah Delta Medical Center, in a release issued by the center. "The CDC expects all hospitals to be able to handle these cases until outside assistance arrives. The KDMC Infection Prevention Team has been working with various hospital disciplines to assure a readiness plan is in place.

"The team has provided updates to staff since July, and will continue to send updates as needed based on official communications from federal, state and local health officials," he continued. "Recently, the team prepared education for staff demonstrating correct procedures for putting on and taking off protective gear. Additionally, an executive approval has been obtained so that in the event that there is an Ebola patient in our care, additional staff will monitor those entering or exiting an isolation room to assure that safe practices are performed."

"We are prepared to handle patients who have Ebola," echoed Melissa Janes, infection prevention manager at Kaweah Delta Health Care District. "If we should receive a patient today, we have rooms

EBOLA continued on **11 »**

Exeter Kiwanis presents
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FROM THE PUBLISHER'S DESK

The Wisest Old Fish in the Water

San Francisco Giants Manager Bruce Bochy, like some ancient, uncatchable catfish--the wisest old fish in the water--has, to use another aquatic analogy, skippered his ball club ingeniously through this post-season--at least until Game 7 of the Fall Classic, when he started 39-year-old pitcher Tim Hudson instead of a two-day-rested Madison Bumgarner, who, at 25, is perhaps the most dominant hurler the World Series has ever seen.

This opening sentence, written before the first pitch, I have decided to stick with. It seems to perfectly contain all the pre-game dread I had lugged around in the aftermath of the Royals' 10-0 Game 6 blowout. Momentum, after all, was with Kansas City. Not only was the finale to be played in their ballpark--under American League rules--but it had been 35 years, since 1979, that a road team had won a Game 7 of the World Series. And Bochy was going with Hudson.

I would have gone with Bumgarner. Bochy eventually did, of course--and he was magnificent--but I question whether the Royals would have scored their two runs had Bumgarner pitched from the outset. It was a tense one-run game until the last out, although one had the sense, with Bumgarner on the mound, that--if Bochy kept him in--the game was, effectively, decided. Still, in the bottom of the ninth inning, with a two-out spark of heroics--or, if you prefer, some centerfield Keystone Coppery--the Royals' Alex Gordon reached third on a two-base error by Gregor Blanco. Don't let Giants fans tell you otherwise--even with the luxury of Bumgarner's command, any time a runner reaches third base in a tight game it is cause for concern. Had Salvador Perez then simply made contact with the ball, the velocity at which Bumgarner was throwing it might conceivably have guaranteed a shot out of the infield. That was Kansas City's only real hope of tying the score. It would have been something of an adventure for the immobilized Perez--who had earlier been hit in the left leg by Hudson--to even reach first base, and I was wondering where he could possibly hit the ball safely when he fouled harmlessly out to the Giants' third-baseman, Pablo Sandoval.

This had not occurred to me, so transfixed was I by the idea of a strikeout. But now I'm consumed by another thought: The delicious irony that, in an American League park, the game-winning hit came off the bat of Michael Morse--our Designated Hitter--who dropped a fourth inning blooper into right field, an RBI single that held for the Giants' eventual 3-2 victory. Here's to the Senior Circuit!

I am not saying that Bochy was wrong to start Hudson, or that, after having done so, he then skillfully deployed his bullpen like some latter-day Duke Ellington conducting an orchestra. Pitching Bumgarner was, really, a no-brainer. And you can't argue with success. But you can do things to keep your fanbase from suffering collective cardiac arrest. That's what I'm saying.

I don't think I'm wrong. I have been wrong before, countless times, and I'm old enough now to know the difference not between right and wrong--you don't get out of childhood without that one--but between correct and wrong. In the 28 years I have been with my wife, for instance, I may have won a single argument.

Then there are the kids. We have five, and no two of them are truly similar in temperament. Or, while I'm at it, in talent. Here's how I'll pare them down: One is huge, athletic without demonstrating any eye-hand coordination whatsoever, and even-keeled. Another is volatile while being well-rounded in the arts. A third is boisterous and absolutely beautiful--a show-stopper who can perform on stage with the best that Broadway can muster. That's no exaggeration. Neither would it be one to say that a fourth--while moody and quiet--has nevertheless been gifted musically, displaying a self-taught virtuosity on several instruments. A fifth is, well, 15 years old--so, to paraphrase Mark Twain and apologize to Sam Clemens, I suppose this one will be amazed by how much I will have learned over the next six years.

The thing of it is, though, that I remain myself. There is one me, and I am outnumbered--though reduced, ironically, to a solitary--yet evolving--role where the wearing of but one hat makes me all things to all people: Dad. Parents of an only child will never understand this.

Very narrowly, then, the following: To one, I am a bank account to make withdraws from when the rent is due or a medical necessity arises. To another, I am a cheerleader, supporter and scapegoat, an occasional ATM, and the usual suspect. To a third, I am now something of a memory, as marriage has eclipsed my influence. By this reasoning--to a fourth--I am a father-in-law. To a fifth, I am a procurer of equipment. And to a sixth, you can accurately figure I'm still everything--except Mom. She wears her own hat.

It's not as if Father knows best anymore. These days, Dad is scrutinized--his every move as open to criticism as the stratagems of a big league manager. I can't, anyhow, honestly claim to be the wisest old fish in the water. Want to know who can? That would be Mom.

— Joseph Oldenbourg

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Political Fix

Continued from p. 1

Alex Padilla, who termed out of the State Senate this year, made the logical political job jump to secretary of state. Betty Yee, another political job jumper who termed out of her Board of Equalization office, won the title of state controller by over Ms. Swearengin by 4%.

At press time, the following results were:

State Assembly District 26: Rudy Mendoza 46.02%, Devon Mathis 53.98%

Because of California's "top two" primary system, 19 State Assembly and Senate races have two candidates from the same party, and Tulare County is home to one of them. Both Rudy Mendoza and Devon Mathis are Republicans, which made the race a little more interesting. Mr. Mendoza and Mr. Mathis are completely different people, but at first glance they hardly diverge on the issues. Mr. Mendoza had all the endorsements, name recognition and money - $287,000 raised versus $22,000 for the Mathis campaign. Mr. Mendoza also walloped all seven of his competitors in the primary, winning 40.89% of that vote. Mr. Mathis hoped to keep him to that same percentage for the general election. Mr. Mathis didn't change his message as he felt Mr. Mendoza did to try and move to the center. Mr. Mathis' message is that he puts people over politics. "Everything I stand for is based on talking to the people. I don't have a separate agenda. We do what's good for the people versus what's good for the party.

When I asked Mr. Mathis's campaign manager, Cole Azare, how Mr. Mathis did so well with so little money he said they put all of their money into advertising. During the primary they only had five signs. That increased to 45 during the general election. Mr. Azare also invested a lot in web advertising and the radio. Mr. Azare made it a policy at the forums that Mr. Mathis be the first one to arrive and the last one to leave.

Supervisor District 5: Incumbent Mike Ennis 61.39%, Virginia Gurrola 37.83%

Supervisor District 5 was the only race in Tulare County where voters had a clear choice in candidates. Porterville City Council Member Virginia Gurrola ran a hard race against incumbent Mike Ennis. Two supervisor districts were actually up for reelection--District 4, covering the Dinuba/Traver area, and District 5, covering the Porterville area. Steve Worthley of District 4 ran unopposed.

Only 8,295 votes were cast in the primary. That's a small number of people in charge of picking someone who can determine the future of Tulare County. In the primary, Mr. Ennis enjoyed a decisive win over his three competitors but fell 23 votes short of avoiding a run off. In Ms. Gurrola's opinion, that means that half of the district wants change and she felt she was the person to accomplish it.

Ms. Gurrola campaigned on the fact that, to solve East Porterville's water problem, the county has to work with the city--but that Mr. Ennis has not done so. She also contends that he has purposely not attended candidate forums and is not responsive to the public. Mr. Ennis counters that among his accomplishments are getting the Army Corps of Engineers to reverse its decision to only allow Lake Success to be filled halfway, founding a mental health clinic in Porterville, obtaining grant money to build a new jail and securing drinking water for those East Porterville residents whose wells had gone dry.

Not surprisingly, the Service Employee International Union (SEIU) endorsed Ms. Gurrola back during the primary. SEIU was critical of how the Tulare County Board of Supervisors (BOS) conducted employee negotiations and want a change of guard after the BOS decided to sue its own workers. Ms. Gurrola has condemned the suit but Supervisor Ennis has enthusiastically supported it.

The two candidates also disagreed about medical marijuana. Both want to eradicate illegal grow sites, but Ms. Gurrola is willing to debate the possibility of one or two medical marijuana dispensaries and allowing those with a medical marijuana card to grow a few plants at home.

COS Ward I: Incumbent Greg Sherman 54.95%, Laurel Barton 44.54%

COS Board of Trustees Ward 1 election saw incumbent Greg Sherman running against challenger Laurel Barton. The debate that waged through the *Visalia Times-Delta* editorials supporting Sherman or Barton was livelier than their face-to face-debate October 17 at Brandman University. They seemed to agree on everything. Strangely enough though, the issue of the accreditation crisis--which happened on Mr. Sherman's watch--never came up on the night of the debate, although it sure lit up the *Times-Delta*'s editorials pages.

District Attorney Tim Ward and Congressman Devin Nunes

State Senate District 14: Incumbent Andy Vidak 54.8%, Luis Chavez 45.2%

State Senate District 14 is another race where there were two clear choices, although very few Tulare County residents could vote in that district. District 14 does encompass all of Kings County, part of Kern and Fresno, but only a small sliver of Tulare County. The Republicans trying to prevent the Democrats from regaining supermajority in the State Senate made this the race to watch in California. With a Republican incumbent and a Democratic registration advantage of 20 points, this was one of the most competitive in the state. It also was one of the few match-ups predicted to increase voter turnout.

The goal for the Republicans was not to take over the State Senate but to prevent a supermajority by the Democrats. Mr. Vidak beat Mr. Chavez when they were the only two candidates in the primary, winning by 22 percentage points. But Mr. Chavez had gained ground over the last few months and Democrats were hopeful that the June and November elections would be completely different. People take the general election more seriously and vote in greater numbers.

According to the *Los Angeles Times*, Democrats are two seats short of the two-thirds supermajority and need to flip two Republican seats. The party lost their supermajority this year because three Democrats were relieved of their duties after being arrested over corruption scandals.

21st Congressional District: Incumbent David Valadao 58.9%, Amanda Renteria 41.1%

Who knew Kings County would be California's election hot spot? The 21st Congressional District, which is very similar to Mr. Vidak's, was the other competitive race to watch in California.

Rep. Valadao's ran a pretty lame campaign against Amanda Renteria, claiming that the Woodlake native was an outsider. She countered that Rep. Valadao is a recent convert to immigration reform--and only out of political expedience--because the district is 71% Hispanic. The evidence suggests this is true. Still, it hasn't hurt this man who, as a Republican, knows how to win an election in a Democratic/Hispanic district—even while running against Hispanics. His first political victory, in 2010, was against Fran Florez; in 2012, he beat John Hernandez. In the 2014 primary, Rep. Valadao walked away with 63% of the vote against Ms. Renteria and Mr. Hernandez. He did this even when his district voted for Jerry Brown in 2010, and overwhelmingly for Barack Obama in 2012. It's what you call a split ticket, and Rep. Valadao is an expert at producing one.

A few days before the election the press was announcing that Ms. Renteria had narrowed the gap to within a 5% margin, but I didn't buy it.

22nd Congressional District: Incumbent Devin Nunes 72.2%, Suzanna "Sam" Aguilera-Marrero 27.8%

Serving in Congress since 2003, sitting on the House Ways and Means Committee and the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, Rep. Nunes retained his seat with minimal campaigning. He is also on the short list to be appointed chairperson of the House Intelligence Committee. The appointment will be made in late November or early December. His Democratic challenger, Ms. Aguilera-Marrero, was unsuccessful both in getting her name known and in campaign fundraising in this heavily Republican district. She was very well spoken, however—especially articulate in her support of the High-Speed Rail being built—and advanced the debate on that issue.

Propositions

Proposition 1 Water Bond: Yes 67.4%

Proposition 1 was not particularly sexy or exciting, but it did produce some strange bedfellows. Assemblyman Tim Donnelly was one of only two state legislators to vote against putting the bond on the ballot. He and almost all of the state's environmental groups were campaigning against the bond. Interestingly, the Sierra Club did not take a position.

Proposition 2 Rainy Day Budget Stabilization Fund Act: Yes 69.8%

"We could not escape from the fact that Proposition 2 and its connected statutory triggers were both unfair and fiscally irresponsible towards schools...The legislature decided to require local school districts to spend all but three weeks of their savings the minute the state saves a nickel."

Proposition 45 Public Notice Required for Insurance Company Rates Initiative: No 60.2%

When Gov. Jerry Brown and his lovely wife, Ann Gust, showed up at the Alameda Registrar of Voters, they had in tow their impeccably groomed dog. Rich people need to take their pampered indoor lapdogs for walks, too, but it's bad optics to bring the pampered pooch to the voting booth when everyone knows that Fido eats better than the 25% of Californians who live in poverty and gets better medical attention than the 50% of Californians with ineffective or no health insurance.

Neither proposition 45 or 46 will solve this country's health care crisis. But when the insurance and medical industries pour $43 million into the "no on proposition 45" campaign you could safely bet that the proposition would have been beneficial for consumers. Nevertheless, the insurance industry won and defeated the proposition.

Proposition 46 Medical Malpractice Lawsuits Cap and Drug Testing of Doctors Initiative: No 67.6%

Proposition 46 is a fight between the medical industry and personal injury lawyers, which means "who cares?" So far the lawyers have lost their case. As of a week before the election, the medical industry had raised $58 million to defeat Proposition 46, and poll numbers showed the proposition losing ground.

Proposition 47 Reduced Penalties for Some Crimes Initiative, Yes 58.1%

This initiative has also produced some interesting bedfellows, with Senator Dianne Feinstein campaigning against the measure and Newt Gingrich passionately campaigning to pass it. His most poignant quote being, "And as California built 22 prisons in 30 years, it built only one public university. California is not alone in feeling the financial (and public safety) consequences of over-incarceration. Several states — politically red states, we would point out — have shown how reducing prison populations can also reduce cost and crime.

Most notably, Texas in 2007 stopped prison expansion plans and instead used those funds for probation and treatment. It has reduced its prison population, closed three facilities and saved billions of dollars, putting a large part of the savings into drug treatment and mental health services. Better yet, Texas' violent crime rates are the lowest since 1977... If so many red states can see the importance of refocusing their criminal justice systems, California can do the same.

Proposition 48 Referendum on Indian Gaming Compacts, No 58.5%

This proposition has lost its relevancy. If the North Fork Rancheria of Mono Indians lose, they will sue to build their casino on Highway 99 and most likely win. This proposition is only delaying the inevitable.

Sandhill Cranes generally fly in pairs, small or large groups when they arrive at the Pixley National Wildlife Refuge for the winter. Photo by Miguel Jimenez, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Sandhill Cranes Return to Pixley National Wildlife Refuge for the Winter

Nancy Vigran

Every fall, thousands of sandhill cranes, along with other migratory birds, return to the Pixley National Wildlife Refuge to spend the winter. The refuge, located in the southern part of Tulare County and maintained by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), provides a warm safe-haven, wetland habitat for the birds through the winter months.

Despite this year's drought, the birds are returning in their regular numbers with more than 3,400 sandhill cranes counted recently, said Miguel Jimenez, USFWS wildlife specialist. The numbers are expected to reach more than 6,000.

As with most everyone in the South Valley, the refuge will be cutting back on its water usage this year. During the summer months of any year, no water is used there. Keeping water on the wetlands during the summer months can contribute to the development of avian botulism, Jimenez said. However, starting in September small amounts of water have been pumped into sections of the refuge from its well. Toward the end of October, approximately 180 acres were being flooded to provide adequate habitat for the arriving birds.

During a normal season, this is increased to about 900 acres by mid-winter, Jimenez said. However, this year, the preserve will only be allotting about 65% of its normal usage, bringing the acres flooded to about 600 acres.

"Less water equals less habitat for the birds," Jimenez said. "We're still getting some water, even if it's not as much as we would like."

Just how that will affect the wildlife and its numbers is yet to be determined. However, a good amount of rainfall this year would certainly be welcome.

Another factor for visiting wildlife is the amount of neighboring acres that are not being farmed at this point in time, Jimenez said. The cranes and some other birds will fly short distances to farmland planted in alfalfa and other crops to forage for insects and seeds. Fewer acres will mean less feeding grounds.

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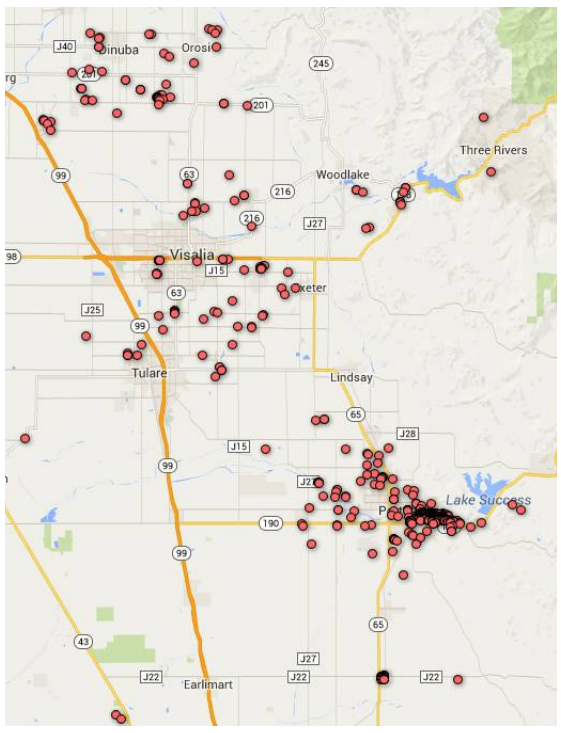
Office of Emergency Services Reports 784 Private Well Failures in Tulare County

Staff Reports

Through the week of November 3, the Tulare County Office of Emergency Services (OES) reported the failure of 784 private wells, most located in and around east Porterville. The Tulare County Board of Supervisors heard a presentation by OES Manager Andrew Lockman during their regular meeting on October 21.

The presentation was focused on steps the county has taken to provide assistance to drought-affected areas. A Drought Task Force was established in March to contend with such things as the delivery of bottled water to homes whose wells have run dry.



Tulare County OES map of private well failures.

"There has been a substantial of staff time from all levels bringing together Health and Human Services, Resource Management, county administration, city governments, non-profits, and state agencies that help with drinking water," Lockman said.

In the most hard hit areas of the county there remains a need for shower and laundry facilities. According to Lockman, some people have been forced to wash their clothes in buckets, while sponge-bathing is becoming more common. "The first thing we've heard a lot about is shower facilities," he said. "This really comes up from the residents of east Porterville."

But short-term solutions tend to be expensive, and many would like to see a more long-term orientation, such as the expansions of present water systems and the creation of new ones.

"We are trying to improve the resiliency here," Lockman said. "Currently these things are happening outside of the OES sphere, but they are what we need to create long-term solutions."

The OES releases a new drought status with information about private well failures, well permit numbers, rental assistance numbers, the Bottled Water Drinking Program, food relief and drought-impacted workers. Each Tuesday the OES reports on the number of wells going dry countywide, and the tally, locating each well on a map, can be viewed at http://goo.gl/Kf26y0. The bottled drinking water application can be accessed at http://goo.gl/KQSGMU.

Residents who need assistance can call 2-1-1 to find local resources and information about housing, food, health, mental health, transit, household goods, employment and family assistance.

New State Programs Create Opportunities for College of the Sequoias

Steve Pastis

Three recently launched state programs offer new opportunities for the College of the Sequoias – a financial literacy program, a program for those displaced by the drought, and most intriguing, the possibility of a four-year degree program.

In late September, Governor Jerry Brown signed legislation that initially allows 15 California community colleges to award bachelor's degrees in fields not currently served by the California State University (CSU) or University of California (UC). The legislation directs the California Community Colleges system to establish a pilot baccalaureate degree program by the 2017-18 academic year.

"We're excited about that and we're very supportive," said COS Superintendent/President Stan Carrizosa. "We think that community colleges provide cost-effective educational opportunities for students, so the opportunity to have a four-year degree program means more access to students.

"We would like to be a part of the pilot process," he continued, but added that COS plans to study the legislation before making a recommendation to the COS Board of Directors on whether to submit an application to become one of the 15 community colleges in the pilot program.

"The bill has some pretty tight restrictions," Carrizosa explained. "The new four-year degree cannot be the same as those offered in the UC or CSU systems. We were a little disappointed by that because COS has a very strong nursing program and we can't offer a four-year nursing degree."

Instead, COS would need to propose a four-year degree program not offered by a public university in the state that "meets a demand in the workplace."

COS has considered several of its two-year programs as a four-year degree offering. Physical therapy assistant is a possibility, according to Carrizosa. "We have a strong two-year program," he said noting that, "nearly 100% (of those completing the program) get placed in employment, and we know there's a demand in that industry." He added that he doesn't believe that there is a four-year degree already offered in this program.

Other possibilities are a four-year industrial technician program, or one for industrial maintenance, according to Carrizosa, who is still interested in what the criteria are. "We want to apply, but we want to put forward a strong application," he said.

The school's administration, academic senate, along with its faculty-based curriculum committee will collaborate on a decision, before a final proposal is submitted to the COS Board of Trustees. "It's probably a year-long process in the making," Carrizosa said.

A program closer to fruition is the $150,000 that COS will receive to provide free job training courses to those who lost their jobs as a result of the drought. COS will offer a 170-hour certified production technician program to serve individuals seeking entry -level production jobs in the advanced manufacturing sector. The program will also serve those who are English language learners by including an 80-hour add-on component of Vocational ESL for those who need it. Those who complete the program will be prepared to become certified production technicians, and also have enhanced math, language, computer and life skills.

Five other Valley community colleges – Fresno City College, Merced College, Modesto Junior College, Reedley College and West Hills College – will offer different courses as part of the drought-displaced program.

"It's just a choice that each college made based on what programs they currently have," explained Jorge Zegarra, director of COS Business, Industry and Community Services. "Modesto Junior College will manage the program and coordinate the implementation."

The program is not a done deal yet, however. "The chancellors have not signed an agreement with Modesto Junior College yet," said Zegarra. "None of the colleges have an agreement in place with Modesto, and Modesto doesn't have a contract with the chancellors." A meeting in Modesto about the program is expected this month.

A financial literacy program to help students make wise choices and prepare for their future has already been launched. California Community Colleges and the National Endowment for Financial Education (NEFE) have partnered to make "CashCourse," its online financial literacy product, available (and free) to every student in the system.

Students can visit www.cashcourse.org for financial education resources, including articles, videos, a financial dictionary and software to help students understand and build budgets. The site includes topics such as "money 101," "paying for education," "making purchases," "working & earning," "money & relationships," and "financial tools." Community college faculty and staff will also be able to use the website and NEFE's resources to help build online and classroom financial literacy courses for students, complete with homework assignments and quizzes.

"That's definitely something that our financial aid department is looking at," said Brent Calvin, COS vice president of student services. "I think a lot of college campus colleges are using it for their loan recipients, but we don't have a lot of loan recipients so we haven't been an early adopter, but the plan is for us to get involved and give that website portal our to our students as a resource. We've got a number of pamphlets and handouts that we give to students and this would be a benefit."

VUSD Changes to Even-Year Elections

Staff Reports

On October 28, the Visalia Unified School District (VUSD) Board of Trustees voted 4-1 to move to even-year elections, a change which will bring VUSD into alignment with 39 of the 45 school districts in Tulare County. The dissenting vote was cast by Trustee Charles Ulmschneider.

The move had been discussed publicly and by the board for many years, according to VUSD Superintendant Craig Wheaton, who noted that Tulare County Registrar of Voters Rita Woodard had been encouraging VUSD to make the change for quite some time.

Voter turnout is generally higher on even-year elections, and because the City of Visalia is considering the same move, the district election cost likely would have grown significantly if VUSD were to have kept to the odd-year election cycle. In the past, each election cost VUSD $30,000 to $70,000; if it had not moved to even-year elections, that price tag could have ballooned to $120,000, which would go toward the printing of materials, mailing ballots, the cost of polling places and stipends for those who help run the polls. Public agencies share the cost of elections in which they participate. Because more public agencies are moving to even-numbered year elections, the price of VUSD elections has been climbing.

"Most of the school districts over the last six to eight years have shifted one at a time to the even year, so yeah, we're one of the last ones," Wheaton said. "I don't know of anyone still on odd years."

Because even-year statewide primary and general elections draw more voters than odd-year elections, VUSD elections can now expect to excite more registered voter attention.

But, said Ulmschneider, this is the very reason VUSD should not have made the shift. "It dilutes the focus on the board to mix it with so many other political things," he said. "Education is very important; it affects us directly and I don't want to dilute it going under the radar."

Most of those opposed to moving elections to even years usually say they don't want school board elections to compete with and get overshadowed by the more popular even-year races, which include presidential and gubernatorial races, Wheaton said.

Keeping the election on odd years would also be to Ulmschneider's advantage because there are no term limits on the VUSD, and low voter turnout almost always plays to the advantage of the incumbent. In the November 2013 elections, Ulmschneider beat out optician Elda Balderas even after it was revealed he lived in Visalia either part-time or not at all while working in Stockton.

Home educator Ana M. Ramirez presents a lesson to parents and children at the Teviston Child Development Center.

Hundreds of Preschoolers Prepare for School through Home Base Program

Staff Reports

Norma Navarro and Ana M. Ramirez have over 40 years of experience between them as home educators with the Early Childhood Education Program (ECE). Last month, the pair invited the parents and children they serve to a socialization meeting at the Teviston Child Development Center. The educators played a game of "I Spy," showing parents how their children could have fun identifying ordinary objects around the house. Later, Ana and Norma conducted a fire safety lesson and demonstrated the "stop, drop and roll" technique.

The socialization meetings, which cover topics of interest to parents, are held twice each month. "Moms often feel isolated at home," said Ramirez. "These meetings and the field trips we take each year help to connect them to their community and other parents." Among the places home educators routinely visit with parents as part of their annual field trips are the library, where they are encouraged to get a library card, and the school their child will attend.

The Home Base Program provides an option for Head Start parents who prefer to have a home educator come to their home and work one-on-one with parent and child. The program assists parents in their role as the first and most important educator of their own children, enhancing the quality of children's lives by building upon existing family strengths.

Weekly home visits lasting 1-1/2 hours are made to each family. During the visits, the home educator works with parents on the same five-school readiness domains as children in the center-based program. Each day of the week, parents are given several activities to address the five domains: physical/health, social/emotional, language/literacy, math/numbers and cognitive.

"We work to empower parents as their child's first teacher and as a role model," said Navarro. "During the home visits, we assess the progress children are making in each of the domains. If the child is struggling in one area, we are able to revise the activities to provide more support to meet his or her needs."

On top of the daily activities, parents are asked to read to their children every day. "We encourage parents to create a quiet education area in their home, with no television," said Ramirez. "Of course, fathers are encouraged to participate, too. We see that the greater the father's engagement, the more effective the lessons." Parents can use books they obtain from the library or simply make up a story about the things they experienced that day.

Norma and Ana are part of a team of 55 professionals who serve Head Start children in the Home Base program. Another 15 home educators serve children in the Early Head Start program. Each home educator is assigned 12 children.

"We are building relationships," said Navarro. "We not only empower parents as educators, but we support them to make community connections that will help their families. We all enjoy feeling that we've helped in some way."

Local Students Chosen for Congress of Future Medical Leaders

Staff Reports

Sarah Rodrigues, a senior, and Blake Sousa, a freshman, both of Tulare Union High School of Tulare have been nominated to attend the Congress of Future Medical Leaders in Washington, D.C. on November 13-16.

The congress is an honors-only program for high school students who want to become physicians or go into medical research fields. The purpose of this event is to honor, inspire, motivate and direct the top students in the country who aspire to be physicians or medical scientists, to stay true to their dream and, after the event, to provide a path, a plan and resources to help them reach their goal.

Sarah Rodrigues, TUHS senior

Sarah and Blake were nominated by Dr. Connie Mariano, the medical director of the National Academy of Future Physicians and Medical Scientists to represent California, based on their academic achievement, leadership potential and determination to serve humanity in the field of medicine.

Blake Sousa, TUHS freshman

Sarah is planning on attending Washington State next year, majoring in pre-med. She would like to be an OB GYN in the future. While in high school, Sarah was involved in the SOPAS club, FFA program showing her steers, and on the soil judging team. Sarah was also on the water polo, swimming and soccer teams. She is also part of the Farm Bureau Youth Leadership Program for the 2014-2015 school year.

Blake is currently on the water polo team, SOPAS and Christian Athletes clubs, and the FFA program where he shows his dairy heifers. He enjoys riding his dirt bike, wakeboarding, snow skiing and playing soccer. When in college, Blake would like to major in Sports Medicine and be a sports physician for a professional team or college.

During the four-day Congress, Sarah and Blake will join students from across the country and hear Nobel laureates and National Medal of Science winners talk about leading medical research; be given advice from Ivy League and top medical school deans on what is to expect in medical school; witness stories told by patients who are living medical miracles; be inspired by fellow teen medical science prodigies; and learn about cutting-edge advances and the future in medicine and medical technology.

"This is a crucial time in America when we need more doctors and medical scientists who are even better prepared for a future that is changing exponentially," said Richard Rossi, executive director, National Academy of Future Physicians and Medical Scientists. "Focused, bright and determined students like Sarah Rodrigues and Blake Sousa are our future and they deserve all the mentoring and guidance we can give them."

The academy offers free services and programs to students who want to be physicians or go into medical science. Some of the services and programs the academy plans to launch in are online social networks through which future doctors and medical scientists can communicate; opportunities for students to be guided and mentored by physicians and medical students; and communications for parents and students on college acceptance and finances, skills acquisition, internships, career guidance and much more.

The National Academy of Future Physicians and Medical Scientists was founded on the belief that we must identify prospective medical talent at the earliest possible age and help these students acquire the necessary experience and skills to take them to the doorstep of this vital career. Based in Washington, D.C., the academy was chartered as a nonpartisan, taxpaying institution to help address this crisis by working to identify, encourage and mentor students who wish to devote their lives to the service of humanity as physicians, medical scientists, technologists, engineers and mathematicians.

Solar

Continued from p. 1

others as our relationship with Panasonic and Coronal continues to develop. The Panasonic-Coronal team's ability to close this transaction quickly and without financial contingencies sets their platform apart," said Don Watson, president of ImMODO Energy Services.

Panasonic and Coronal Group currently do not have additional projects in the South Valley but, according to Weld Royal, corporate communications manager for the Panasonic Corporation of North America, "They are looking at potential or future projects in this area all the time."

Visalia Approves New General Plan

Catherine Doe

After four years of hard work, the Visalia City Council adopted their General Plan. After a three-and-a-half hour final meeting on October 14, the vote was 5-0 to adopt the Climate Action Plan, the General Plan Update and the associated Environmental Impact Report.

"This truly is the community's plan--the community was engaged throughout the process, from inception to adoption," said Mayor Steve Nelsen. "The time and commitment, attention to detail, public discussion and debate has brought us to this moment, and this plan will now guide the city's growth for the next 20 years."

This update replaces the existing General Plan which was adopted in 1991. Minor updates have been made to the plan over the years, but no comprehensive update has been done until now.

The plan consists of nine chapters, which cover the following topics: land use; circulation; open space; conservation; components related to noise, safety, air quality and greenhouse gases; as well as elements that address local concerns such as historic preservation and parks, schools, community facilities and utilities. The Climate Action Plan provides a strategy for reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. It includes objectives and policies from the proposed General Plan that addresses long-term emissions reduction efforts.

The update process was led by the General Plan Update Review Committee (GPURC) comprised of 25 members representing all facets of the community. Over 33 GPURC meetings involved sharing information and ideas that were developed through a variety of methods used to ensure the community's full participation, including stakeholder interviews, community workshops, and four "Town Hall" style meetings, one in each quadrant of the city.

Four-and-a-half years seems like a long time to update a document, but not when you consider what happened in Tulare. According to the *Visalia Times-Delta*, "The general plan process started in 2006 and was initially approved in 2008. However, a successful California Environmental Quality Act challenge derailed the process. City officials then addressed the court orders."

Tulare approved their general plan within days of Visalia approving theirs but it took eight years to finalize. Tulare ended up being forced to adopt a 1/1 acre ratio Agricultural Mitigation Plan (AMP) that goes into effect immediately. Both Visalia and Tulare's general plans create a buffer between the two cities. Tulare's General Plan runs through 2035 while Visalia's goes to 2030.

Nelsen took Tulare's lesson to heart. The town was sued because they had no mechanism to mitigate for the loss of agriculture land and now have no options. As a result, they are stuck with a plan that requires developers to pay extra fees starting this month. On the other hand, Visalia voted 3-2 for an ag mitigation plan that doesn't go into effect for 8-10 years. During those years, if ag mitigation plans prove to be a disaster, the courts will no longer mandate cities to implement them. That means in eight years the city council can either change or eliminate their AMP.

"Got to have options," said Nelsen.

Visalia's AMP was a creative compromise that had something in it to please almost anyone. Visalia's General Plan consists of three growth tiers. The ag mitigation plan does not affect the land inside tier I, but goes into effect when Visalia and enters growth tier II and III. According to Josh McDonnell, city planner, the trigger to open up tier one will happen when permits for 5,850 residential units are issued. The time period for permit issuance began on April 1, 2010. Around 1,500 units have been permitted to date. Thus, about 4,500 units need to be permitted before Visalia grows to Tier II.

So for the next ten years, developers in Visalia will not be paying mitigation fees, and, as Council Member Greg Collins pointed out, it will encourage in-fill development. In addition, there is not a large amount of viable agriculture land in growth tier I to start with.

Vice Mayor Warren Gubler voted against the AMP. He believes that Visalia is already one of the cities in the state most interested in smart growth. He said that the AMP is untested and unnecessary and the farm bureau and farmers were not for it. "I listened to them," he said. When asked about the possibility of the city being sued, "I'm an attorney. People say that all the time and 99% of the time it doesn't happen. You can't govern like that. You have to govern by what is best for the city." Nelsen's strategy to avoid being sued, then removing the mitigation plan in a few years if it proves ineffective, is "reverse thinking," said Gubler. "Once it's in it's in, and will be very hard to reverse."

Concerning the other incorporated cities in Tulare County, Dinuba and Exeter each have a 10-year-old general plan, and Porterville has one that is five years old. The county also by law has to have a growth plan and the Tulare County Board of Supervisors adopted theirs in 2012. It is good until 2030.

For information on Visalia's General Plan Update, go to www.visaliageneralplanupdate.com.

CSET Offers Free Water Bill Assistance to Tulare County Residents

Community Services Employment Training (CSET) is offering free residential water bill assistance to low-income households with their residential water utility bill to prevent disruption in vital water services and to promote water conservation. The residential water bill assistance is made possible by a grant from the State of California's Drought Water Assistance Program (DWAP).

CSET is partnering with local water providers to enhance the effectiveness of outreach and coordinate payment of a client's current, past due and/or disconnected water utility bill. Water providers in the following communities are participating: Allensworth, Alpaugh, Dinuba, Exeter, Farmersville, Porterville, Tulare, Woodlake, Cutler, Earlimart, Ivanhoe, Orosi, Pixley, Richgrove, Strathmore, Teviston and Woodville. Residents within those communities who meet income eligibility requirements may apply.

"We are pleased to offer the water bill assistance during this time of need," stated Nora Carrillo, CSET's assistant director of energy and housing. "These funds will be a great help to local residents."

Tulare County residents interested in applying for DWAP assistance should call 741-4607 or 741-4652. Residents must provide water bills for the current and previous months. Funding is limited and will be distributed on a first-come first-served basis.

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Porterville College Veterans Resource Center to be Dedicated

A dedication ceremony for the new Porterville College Veterans Resource Center will be held on Friday, November 7, from 12:15 to 1pm in the campus quad area. The dedication will include a "Tribute to All Veterans."

The Veterans Resource Center was developed as part of Porterville College's response to the summer 2013 White House Initiative "8 Keys to Success in Serving Veterans." In an effort to respond, Porterville College established a Veterans Advisory Task Force, consisting of campus staff and faculty, community members and student veterans, to discuss the keys and formulate responses that the college could implement.

The task force reviewed and discussed recent literature and best practices, and some members also visited veteran centers on other community college campuses. The task force began meeting twice per month last December and made its final recommendations to Dr. Rosa Carlson, president of Porterville College, in April. The recommendations were then presented and approved at a meeting of the College Learning Council.

Key #4 of the White House initiative encouraged colleges to create a designated space on campus where the veterans could go for assistance, referral or to meet with fellow veterans. A location for the center was selected where six offices were being vacated.

Once these offices became vacant at the end of the spring 2014 term, Veteran Resource Center Coordinator/Counselor Steve Schultz moved into one of the offices, and another office was designated for student study or as an on-campus location for community service agencies that may want to meet privately with veterans, with the open area to serve as a lounge and mess area.

With a wish list in hand and no money in the budget for furniture or other equipment for the center, Schultz began contacting local businesses, agencies, organizations and individuals in the community to consider donating to the center. The response from the community was tremendous. The wish list of needs Schultz had for the center was completely met by the donations from the community. Everything in the center has been donated, so when a veteran walks into the center, he or she will get an immediate visual of the community's support for its veterans.

Porterville College's Veterans Resource Center includes an open area which serves as a lounge and mess area.

The services and activities of the center include: priority registration, a designated veteran's counselor, study room with computers, lounge area for camaraderie, the Student Veterans Organization (student club), Veterans Affairs Work Study students working as "Veterans Assistants," free parking passes at initial enrollment, referrals to the VA and numerous veteran service providers, monthly camaraderie luncheses, monthly "Late Lunch and Learn" workshops, end of academic year "Patriot Awards" for leadership, academic excellence and commitment to fellow students and community service projects.

Additional services and activities are being planned and the recommendations from the Veterans Advisory Task Force's report on the college's response to the "8 Keys to Success" initiative will be fully implemented.

For more information, contact Coordinator Steve Schultz at sschultz@portervillecollege.edu or 791-2218.

Prestige Assisted Living at Visalia to Host Author David Troxel

Prestige Assisted Living at Visalia will host the event "Managing Challenging Behaviors" at 10:30am on Tuesday, November 18, at 3120 W. Caldwell Ave. in Visalia. The guest speaker will be David Troxel.

Prestige partnered with Troxel, creator of the "Best Friends Approach" of memory care to develop a unique program.

Expressions is a person-centered, industry-leading memory support program for Prestige Senior Living and Prestige Care based in Vancouver, Washington. The key concept of the program is that persons with dementia should enjoy five key expressions of life each day: healthy, tasty, artistic, educational and spiritual.

This acclaimed program has been presented at professional conferences in the United States and internationally, and was a recipient of the 2012 International Council on Active Aging Innovators Awards.

Troxel is the author of five books, including *A Dignified Life*, and *The Best Friends Approach to Alzheimer's Care*, and is an expert on the best practices for Alzheimer's care and other forms of dementia.

Candles of Care

Prestige Assisted Living at Visalia will light "candles of care" to remember and honor individuals with Alzheimer's disease or related illnesses, and their families as part of National Commemorative Candle Lighting - Weekend of Prayer, an annual event of the Alzheimer's Foundation of America. This event will take place at Prestige Assisted Living, 3120 W. Caldwell Ave. in Visalia on Friday, November 7 at 4pm.

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Kaweah Delta
HEALTH CARE DISTRICT

CEMEX

Continued from p. 1

shall not affect the water level, yield or quality of any well." Ironically, the dataloggers installed into residents' wells in late August will be the definitive proof that CEMEX broke this condition. Information gleaned from the dataloggers shows that when CEMEX keeps the V-trench filled, residents' wells return to normal; when they don't, the wells go dry.

Yet in a hydrology report commissioned by CEMEX last February, the geohydrologist blamed the drought for the wells next to the Stillwell Mine going dry. In a peer review done by Tully and Young five months later, and commissioned by Tulare County's RMA, CEMEX was found to be the culprit for the wells going dry. The peer review and public hearing in December will be the final judge whether the wells went dry because of the drought or because CEMEX stopped filling the recharge trench.

Notice of the Planning Commission's Public Hearing will be given at least ten days in advance. All are welcome and encouraged to attend.

Stillwell Mine Might be Declared Abandoned

It was recently disclosed that CEMEX had stopped production at the Stillwell Mine on May 17, 2013. Until this October, Lemon Cove residents and neighbors were left to guess about the status of the mine. Because CEMEX stopped mining, it was required to submit an IMP by August 15, 2014 to prevent the county from declaring the mine abandoned. On exactly August 15, Benchmark Resources, a consulting company hired by CEMEX, submitted what Spata referred to as a draft IMP document. Despite the rules stating that CEMEX' IMP should have already been pending in front of the TCBOS, the multinational did hand in something with "IMP" in the title. That sufficed to forestall the county from declaring the mine abandoned.

For a mine to be considered idle, three conditions must be met: 1) Production is curtailed in the last year of operation by 90% of the mine's most productive year; 2) An IMP must be submitted by one year and 90 days after the last day of production; and 3) The operator intends to resume operations.

Spata reviewed Benchmark Resource's 246-page document, containing missing and incorrect data, then cited three major reasons why RMA was rejecting CEMEX' IMP. In Spata's response letter, he stated that the appropriate application was not filled out and Benchmark did not pay the application fees. Secondly, CEMEX extracted more gravel than allowed in 2013 to be considered idle. Lastly, CEMEX did not provide a plan for maintaining residents' water levels in their wells while the mine was idle. Benchmark has until November 13 to respond.

Knowing Spata wouldn't tell me, I asked his opinion on the quality of Benchmark Resources' document. "I can't comment on the quality of the IMP. But we stated in our letter that it was deficient."

Though hurriedly put together and of questionable quality, two glaring reasons stand out why CEMEX bothered to even submit an IMP. One was to attempt to circumvent the conditions of its mining permit. A second was to avoid the cost of reclamation.

CEMEX declared its intent in the IMP to resume mining at Stillwell. It won't give a date, but says that the plan outlined in their IMP covers the initial five years allowed. A subsequent five-year extension may be requested by CEMEX, which would extend the idle designation until 2024.

Those living at ground zero are very skeptical that CEMEX will resume production again. In 2002, local mining experts looked at the Stillwell property and didn't think there was enough gravel to be worth the effort in the first place. According to Tom Cairns, owner of a small mining operation in Lemon Cove, the last load of gravel out of Stillwell in May of 2013 only had 20% usable gravel.

If TCBOS declares the mine abandoned, CEMEX must start reclamation immediately--and that could cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. Not so, according to their Financial Assurances document. CEMEX claims in this document that reclamation will only cost $52,588.78. But that's just Starbucks money for a corporation like CEMEX, and won't even come close to making the property whole again.

I'm not an expert on gravel mining, so I don't know how it is to their advantage to stretch Stillwell out 10 years--but CEMEX knows, and obviously has a plan.

Another reason CEMEX submitted an IMP was to get out of playing by the rules. Benchmark Resources wrote in their report, "The use permit includes 93 conditions of approval (COA). No COA's apply to the site maintenance during idle periods." Spata's response to Benchmark's assertions was a bit of a verbal smack down. He corrected the consultants by saying that, yes, in fact, CEMEX does have to comply with all of the Conditions of Approval, even when idle, as stated in California law, and as stated in its reclamation plan.

Benchmark Resources' justification for idling Stillwell is the supposed reduced demand for construction aggregates. But according to the Business Journal, "Northern Tulare County was shown to have....27 million tons of permitted reserves. That represents 22% of the area's 50-year demand of 124 million tons." Claiming that the demand for aggregate materials has gone down, when Tulare County can only supply 22% of their need, might be a false pretence to idle/shutdown the mine without having to pay for reclamation.

The Document

When Spata's only comment was that CEMEX' IMP was "deficient," he was being overly kind. Out of their 246-page document, approximately three pages were devoted to talking about its actual plan for the mine while idle. The tome did have an unintelligible table of contents, appendices A and B, tables, exhibits, irrelevant pictures of an old labor camp that has nothing to do with the mine, many duplicate maps, all with inaccurate boundary lines, and 86 pages printed straight from CA.Gov of prevailing wages and the price of equipment rentals. After reading through the document, I couldn't tell you precisely what CEMEX' plan was, but I could tell you that in 2008 the prevailing wage in Marin County was $10.12 an hour.

It's important to point out the incestuous relationship between all the players involved with the Stillwell Mine, the Lemon Cove facility, and all the so-called independent professional firms CEMEX hires. EMKO Environmental, which did the original peer review, Resource Design, which wrote the reclamation plan, Mitchell Chadwick, the law firm, and Benchmark Resources, are all in bed with CEMEX--and with each other. The lawyer's and consultant's slick websites and big titles all give an air of impartiality and independence. But the Mexican-owned cement company says they "retain" each firms' services. These firms are not hired to be impartial nor to aid the multinational in complying with the conditions of their permit. They are hired and paid to say what CEMEX tells them to say.

Residents' Wells Returning to Normal? Yes and No

A recent letter from CEMEX' lawyer to Spata states, "...as you know, CEMEX started filling the V-ditch starting September 2nd." The letter goes on to say that one of the problems with filling the ditch is its porous material. But that doesn't explain why it has taken two months. And if it does take two months or more, then CEMEX should never let the trenches go dry.

The Mortons, who own the first house to benefit from the V-ditch, got water in mid-October. Their well water level rose from 16.5 feet down to their pre-Stillwell level of 5 feet. They can now take showers and do laundry like any normal household. Elias Rodriguez' well just returned to pre-Stillwell Mine levels during the last week of October, nearly two months after CEMEX tried to fill the V-trench. Their well went dry late December 2013, and for almost a year Rodriguez had to haul large containers of water to his house just to cover the bare minimum of his family's needs. The two other homes, those of Josh Packard and Mary and Oroville Cloud, still do not have water.

In accordance with their permit, CEMEX is required to keep the V-trench full whether mining or not. When CEMEX stopped pumping water from the pits it created while mining to the recharge trench, it caused significant financial damage to the four families whose wells went dry as a result. Not only was it a financial and emotional burden on the families, but their homes lost all value. Rob Morton bought a home six years ago with a beautiful view and one of the most reliable wells in California. CEMEX changed everything and now the Mortons have neither. (An article in Valley Voice's next issue will list the financial expenses and the lost value in their homes.)

The Tulare County Farm Bureau wrote a blistering critique of CEMEX that touched upon the idea of compensation. "We believe CEMEX should be accountable for the damages done to people and property near the Stillwell plant site operations, and be compelled to make them whole. Slanderous comments made by legal representation of the mining operation towards neighbors and their properties should be discontinued and the record corrected to the extent it contains falsehoods."

I asked Cairns, who was himself slandered by CEMEX' lawyers, what he thought the chances of an apology were. "I'm not holding my breath," he said.

Women's Conference Promotes Health, Safety, Employment, Education and Environment

Staff Reports

Providing easy access to essential services to the women who are the backbone of the local agricultural economy is the mission of the 12th annual Farmworker Women's Conference, to be held at the Tulare County Fairgrounds on Friday, November 7, from 7:30am through 3:30pm.

The conference is a collaborative effort and the goal, says Lali Moheno, conference coordinator, is "improving the health, wellness and mental health of the farmworker woman."

This year's conference, made possible by the United Women's Organization – Organización de Mujeres Unidas, and Tulare County Health & Human Services Agency (HHSA), in collaboration with numerous community partners, will once again emphasize maintaining health and wellness for the whole family. Additionally, the conference will address the education of the children of farmworker families by focusing on understanding Common Core, ELA/ELD, literacy and the importance of school attendance.

Community partners, including the HHSA, the Tulare County Office of Education, the State of California Department of Industrial Relations, the California Employment Development Department, the Tulare County Sheriff's Department and the Tulare County District Attorney's Office, will provide workshops addressing gang prevention, school attendance, reading programs, mental health awareness, suicide prevention, chronic disease prevention, education nutrition and parenting.

"This one-day conference is an opportunity for the women who uphold our agricultural community to focus on topics related to health and wellness," said Dr. Cheryl Duerksen, HHSA director. "Moreover, it's an opportunity for us to symbolically and concretely celebrate the women who work tirelessly each and every day to ensure the bounty we too frequently take for granted."

The conference will be conducted in Spanish only. Translators will be available for English speakers. Childcare will be provided by the Proteus Inc. Child Care Program and a licensed childcare provider. Transportation will be available at participating schools. A continental breakfast and lunch will be provided. Registration is free to farmworker women. The attendees will have the opportunity to win door prizes, gift certificates and food baskets. They will also enjoy local art and music.

For more information and registration, call Lali Moheno at 733-4121.

Family HealthCare Network Re-opens Renovated Visalia Health Center

Staff Reports

After completing a two-month renovation, Family HealthCare Network (FHCN) opened its Visalia Bridge Health Center in Downtown Visalia on Nov. 1. With new extended hours, the 15,000-square-foot facility is now open seven days a week, offering family medicine walk-in care, along with full dental services and expanded space for community outreach and enrollment services.

In addition, the renovated health center will serve as the new home for FHCN's Hometown Scholars program. Adopted by FHCN in 2008, the Hometown Scholars program is aimed at recruiting high-quality, community-minded leaders to train and serve in medically underserved populations, like those in Tulare County.

Serving as the only community campus in California for students from A.T. Still University's School of Osteopathic Medicine, FHCN has seen 38 medical students graduate from the program, which is now in its sixth year of enrollment. The program continues to grow as FHCN recently welcomed its first dental residents through a partnership with the Lutheran Medical Center Dental Residency Program. Dental residents Alexandra Bassett DDS, and Saro Babaian DDS, joined the team at FHCN in July for a one-year community health center center-based postdoctoral dental residency. The renovated Bridge Street site will provide students and residents with classroom and study space along with new training facilities.

Family HealthCare Network's new Bridge Health Center in Downtown Visalia

The Visalia Bridge Health Center, located at 501 N. Bridge St. in Downtown Visalia, is open Monday through Friday, 9am to 10pm, and on Saturdays and Sundays from 8am to 8pm. Dental services are offered Monday through Friday, 7am to 9pm, and on Saturdays from 8am to 5pm. For more information about FHCN, call 877-960-3426 or visit www.fhcn.org.

Family HealthCare Network is a private nonprofit organization that operates 18 sites, of which 14 are community health centers located in Tulare and Kings Counties. Family HealthCare Network is recognized by the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) as a Level 3 Patient Centered Medical Home and is dually recognized by The Joint Commission with its Gold Seal of Approval for Patient Quality and Safety and as a Patient Centered Primary Medical Home.

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Ebola

Continued from p. 1

in emergency, but the endoscopy suite is most likely where we will place a patient."

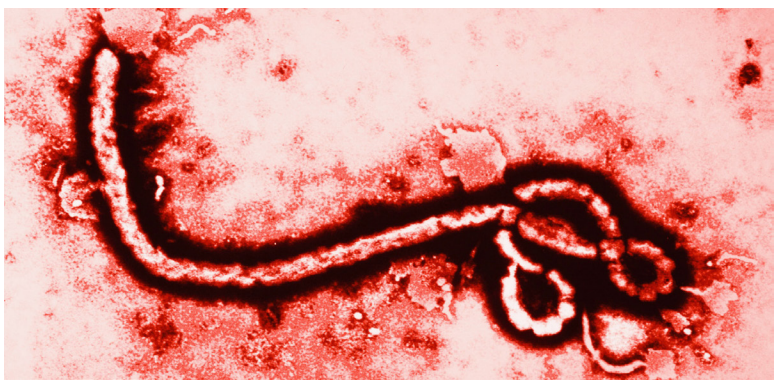
Kaweah Delta has accumulated an inventory of personal protective equipment for its staff, including hoods, N95 respirator masks, goggles, face shields, Level 3 fluid-resistant gowns, aprons, gloves with extended cuffs, and boot covers. Acquiring some of these items was a challenge, according to Janes. "Every other hospital in the United States wants the same kind of equipment," she said.

Kaweah Delta's plan calls for it to transfer any Ebola patients to a facility that has a higher level of isolation units, said Janes. University of California medical centers in Irvine, San Diego, Los Angeles, Davis and San Francisco have such facilities.

"As part of a public university, UC's medical centers are far along in their preparation activities and are willing to care for confirmed Ebola patients," said Dr. John Stobo, UC senior vice president for health sciences and services. "Stepping up to a public health crisis is what these medical centers do, and in the past weeks we have been actively readying ourselves for any health eventuality related to Ebola."

Kaweah Delta has been receiving a lot of education on the disease, which it shares with its residents and with all physicians who serve it. The information helps identify Ebola symptoms, including the key questions to ask patients, such as if they have travelled to Guinea, Sierra Leone or Nigeria in the past 21 days.

Local health officials continue to watch for updates about Ebola. The United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) may make changes to their recommendations about how to deal with the disease.



The Ebola virus.

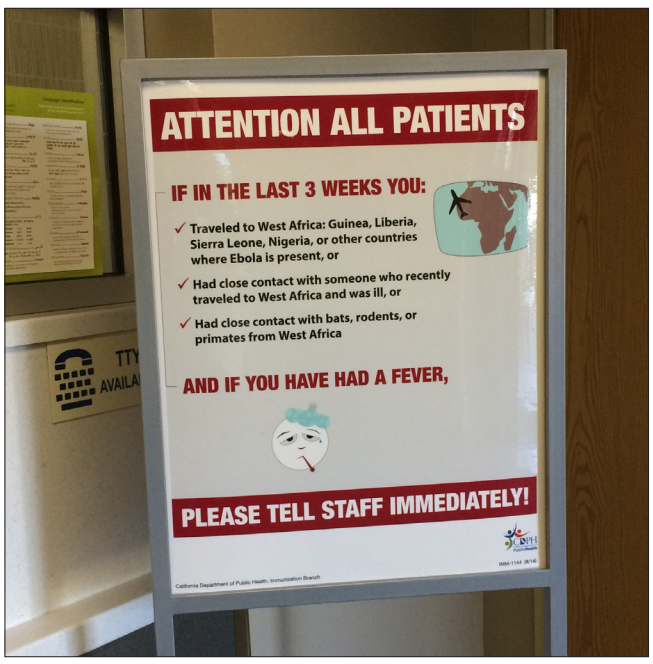
"Things happen and it changes course," said Janes. "CDC is doing the best job it can."

But what if Ebola arrives in Tulare County, not as a single patient, but as an outbreak?

"First of all, there's not going to be an outbreak," said Tulare County Health Officer Karen Haught, M.D. "That's because of our public healthcare system. Hospitals here are very prepared. Africa has a very different environment.

"I think people in Tulare County should not worry that they're going to get sick with Ebola," added Haught, who was asked how easily the disease could spread if someone in the county became infected and went out in public. "If a person is exposed but doesn't have symptoms, that person is not contagious. We have an active monitoring system. Anyone exposed will be tested twice a day."

The county effort includes working together as a team, with everyone understanding their role and the protocols for dealing with Ebola.

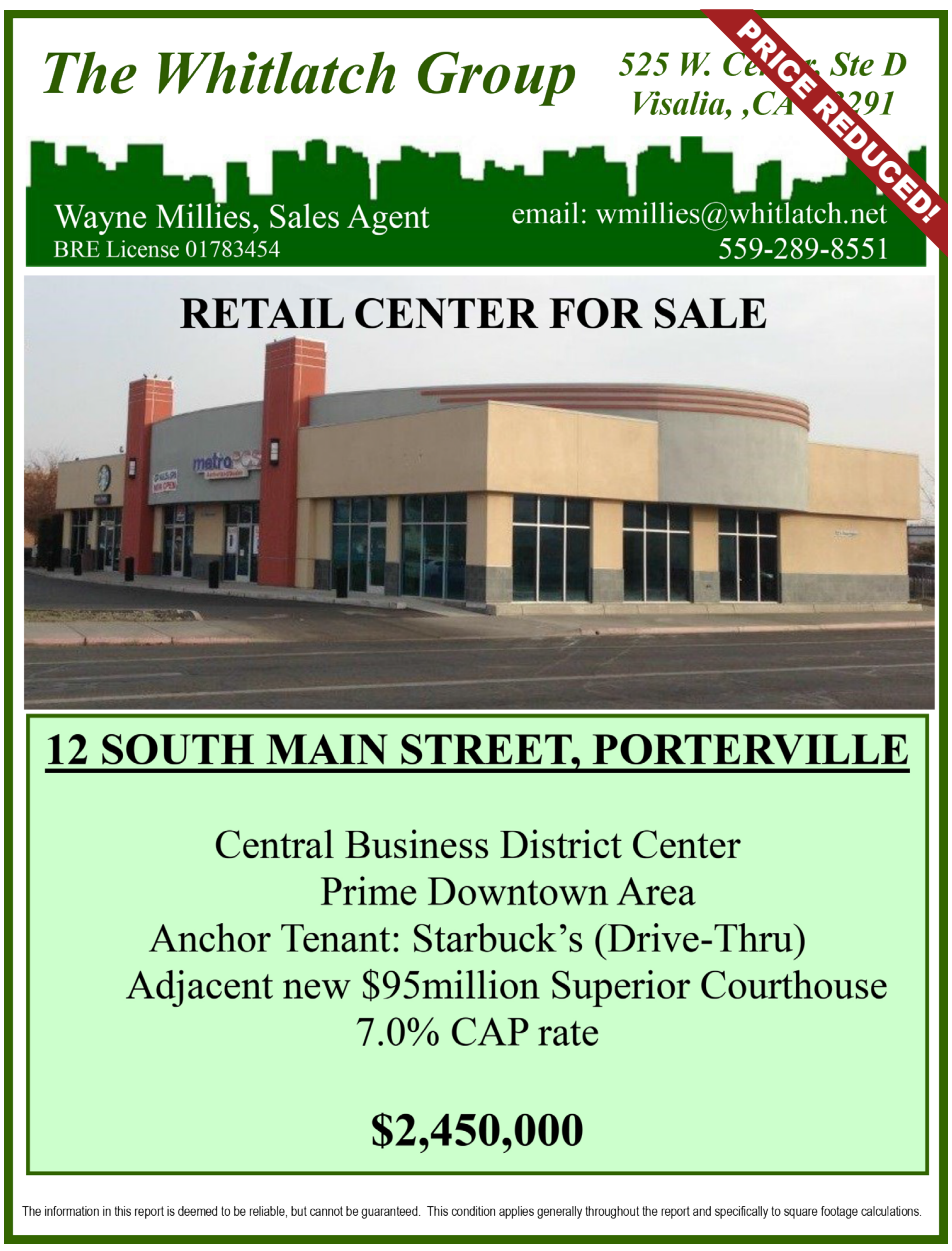


A sign of the times at Kaweah Delta.

"We work collaboratively," said Haught. "My responsibility is to oversee the monitoring of any persons who returned to Tulare County from West Africa."

If those who have been in West Africa recently show symptoms, Haught helps coordinate their testing. She also works to ensure that local healthcare providers have the most current information about Ebola.

"We're meeting with hospitals and the California Department of Public Health on a regular basis," she said.



Briefly...

County Seeks Input on Mooney Grove Plan

The County of Tulare invites residents to participate in a workshop focusing on the county's 20-year master plan for Mooney Grove Park. This meeting is the first of two that will be held this year seeking input on the plan. Both meetings are being held prior to the Tulare County Board of Supervisors' final consideration of the plan. It is anticipated that the second meeting will be held in December, with board consideration coming in January.

The plan was prepared by the county with the assistance of a consultant, and provides recommendations for improved circulation, enhanced recreational opportunities, new historic installations and additional infrastructure developments. During the development of the plan, several public meetings were conducted to seek input. This workshop will provide an opportunity for the public to ask questions of county staff and provide feedback on the proposed recommendations included in the plan.

The workshop is scheduled for November 6 at 5:30pm and will be held at 210 W. Center St., Visalia.

Public Meeting for Greenway Trail Project Set for November 13

A public outreach meeting to discuss the Southern California Edison Greenway Trail project is set for 5:30pm Thursday, November 13, at the Whitendale Center, 630 W. Beech, Visalia.

The meeting will inform residents, particularly those who have property adjacent to or in close proximity of the proposed trail, from just north of the Rector Station to its connection with the St. John's River Trail. The meeting will discuss what is being planned in the design of the trail, requirements of Southern California Edison, proposed amenities and the timeframe of the improvements.

Design team members attending the meeting will include representatives from SCE, Brian Thorburn, regional manager/local public affairs; Matt Ainley and Craig Hartman of 4Creeks Engineering; and Kay Hutmacher of Sierra Designs, Inc. City of Visalia Project Manager Vaughn Melcher will facilitate the discussion.

The trail is about three miles long, and will be an important North-South trail connecting several trail systems in the city. It also will connect to the future Eastside Regional Park facility located at the northeast corner of State Highway 198 and Road 148. The estimated cost of construction is $3 million.

For more information, contact Melcher at vaughn.melcher@ci.visalia.ca.us.

High-Speed Rail Authority Releases Small Business, Jobs Report

The High-Speed Rail Authority has released its Small Business Participation and Jobs Report Covering the period of June 1-30. The report looked at 21 prime contractors that logged 139,838 man-hours worked, resulting in 832 full-time equivalent jobs. The prime contractors combined have 156 certified small businesses, including 21 certified disabled veteran business enterprises, committed to work on the program.

"Now that work on the nation's first high-speed rail program is underway in the Central Valley, we are seeing the faces of people getting much-needed jobs, and small businesses that have been able to expand and hire new people," said Authority CEO Jeff Morales. "Not only are we providing jobs, we are also working with our stakeholders in the area to get interested workers connected with job training and other resources they can use to launch their careers."

In an effort to provide a timely and transparent accounting of jobs and small business participation in the program, the Authority will begin issuing this report quarterly starting this month. The reports will be made available at www.hsr.ca.gov/Newsroom/studies_reports.html.

Sierra Bancorp Announces Santa Clara Valley Bank Acquisition

Sierra Bancorp, parent of Bank of the Sierra, announced that on October 29, the shareholders of Santa Clara Valley Bank, N.A. approved its consolidation with a newly formed wholly owned subsidiary of Sierra Bancorp. All required regulatory approvals have now been received and the consolidation is expected to close on November 14.

Sierra Bancorp is the holding company for Bank of the Sierra, which is in its 37th year of operations and at $1.5 billion in assets is the largest independent bank headquartered in the South San Joaquin Valley. The company has over 400 employees and conducts business through 25 branch offices, an online branch, a real estate industries center, an agricultural credit center and an SBA center.

As announced on July 17, Sierra Bancorp entered into a definitive agreement to acquire Santa Clara Valley Bank, which has approximately $125 million in assets and maintains branches in Santa Paula, Santa Clarita and Fillmore.

McPhaill to Replace Holly as Sierra Bancorp CEO

Sierra Bancorp, the holding company for Bank of the Sierra, announced that James C. Holly plans to retire as its CEO on March 31, 2015. Holly was instrumental in starting the Porterville-based bank in 1977, and maintained his role as bank president and CEO for more than 36 years.

Holly has seen Bank of the Sierra flourish from a small, single office bank to a 25-branch multi-community bank. Through multiple recessions and a corporate building fire in the early '90s, Holly and his team have managed to generate a profit every year since 1982. Sierra Bancorp is the largest publicly traded financial institution headquartered in Tulare County and is traded on NASDAQ. Although Holly will retire as CEO, he will continue on as a director and will retain all current board committee assignments. In addition, he will be appointed vice chairman of the board for both Sierra Bancorp and Bank of the Sierra, with oversight for merger and acquisition activities.

The board of directors has finalized the company's management succession plan and announced that President and Chief Operating Officer Kevin McPhaill has been designated as Holly's successor, to be appointed by the board as president and chief executive officer for Sierra Bancorp and Bank of the Sierra upon Holly's retirement.

Locally born and raised, McPhaill grew up in Tulare County and attended Fresno Pacific University for his undergraduate degree and earned his MBA at Fresno State University. McPhaill has been in banking for 24 years, including 13 years with Bank of the Sierra.

Kaweah Delta Medical Lab Receives National Accreditation

The laboratory at Kaweah Delta Medical Center has been awarded accreditation by the Accreditation Committee of the College of American Pathologists (CAP), based on the results of a recent onsite inspection.

Accreditation has been granted to Kaweah Delta's lab for a two-year period. In 2011, Kaweah Delta upgraded its chemistry lab to a state-of-the-art system that relies on robotics. This has improved turnaround time, workflow, efficiency and most importantly, it's helping patients get their lab results more quickly, said David Peterson, the laboratory's director.

During the accreditation process, inspectors examine the laboratory's records and quality control of procedures for the preceding two years. CAP inspectors also examine laboratory staff qualifications, as well as the laboratory's equipment, facilities, safety program and record, in addition to the overall management of the laboratory.

Tulare County Youth Commission Vacancies Announced

The Tulare County Board of Supervisors is seeking District Two, Three and Four residents to fill four current vacancies on the Tulare County Youth Commission.

"Serving on the youth commission gives individuals an opportunity to become 'hands-on' involved with funding programs in our county that make a difference in the lives of hundreds of young people," said Chairman of the Board of Supervisors Phil Cox. "If you are looking for a way to have an influence on this county's future leaders, then this is it."

The Tulare County Youth Commission reviews grant applications submitted through the Step Up Youth Activities grant. The Youth Activities grant makes $20,000 in grant funds available to each of the five supervisorial districts. The youth commission then makes funding recommendations to the board of supervisors, which makes the final decision. The commission also receives written and verbal reports from grant recipients to ensure proper use of funds.

The Youth Commission meets every third Wednesday of the month at 3pm at the County Administrative Office, 2800 W. Burrel Ave., Visalia. Applications are available at www.tularecounty.ca.gov, at the Board of Supervisors office, 2800 W. Burrel Ave. or by calling 636-5000. For more information, contact Commission Staff Juileta Martinez at 636-5000 or jmartinez2@co.tulare.ca.us.

PC Now Taking Nominations for Alumni Hall of Fame

The Fifth Annual Porterville College Foundation Hall of Fame Banquet will take place Saturday, March 7, 2015 at the River Island Country Club. The PC Foundation is now taking nominations for Athletics and Distinguished Alumni. The deadline for nominations is January 5.

The Alumni Hall of Fame award recognizes former Porterville College students who have made outstanding contributions to both their professions and their communities; these alumni embody the highest standards of excellence. Induction into the Alumni Hall of Fame is the highest honor given to alumni by the Porterville College Foundation.

Selection Criteria should include the following: A) The nominee has achieved a high level of success in his or her professional career. B) The nominee has demonstrated outstanding involvement and leadership at both PC and within their community. C) In order to be eligible for this award, five years must have passed since the nominee attended Porterville College. D) The nominee must have successfully completed 24 units at PC. The majority of the units completed should be in general education, major or certificate courses. F) The nominee may not nominate themselves. G) All nominations must be submitted using the proper athletic or alumni form.

Nomination forms are available for download on the Porterville College website at www.portervillecollege.edu (click the Foundation link). Mail all nominations to PC Foundation, Attn: Alumni Hall of Fame, 100 E. College Ave., Porterville, CA 93257. For more information, contact Carol Bodine, foundation secretary, at 791-2319 or cbodine@portervillecollege.edu.

Public Meeting Set for Measure E Update

Visalia Unified School District will host a public meeting from 6 to 8pm on Thursday, Nov. 6, to review the district's response to the delay and potential loss of matching funds from the State of California.

The meeting will be held at the VUSD Board room, 5000 W. Cypress Ave., Visalia. Presenters will be Monique Miron, owner of CM Construction Services, Visalia; Chris Hale, senior project manager for CM Construction; and Mike Cannon and Ken Reynolds of SchoolWorks. School superintendent Craig Wheaton, Ed.D., will also be available to answer questions.

A new school bond on the November election would have provided matching grants for the new construction and modernization work that was funded by Measure E. However, Gov. Brown vetoed the proposed proposition. The result is that projects are delayed until additional funding becomes available.

"We will present what has been accomplished, and what the lack of state funding means for our plans for additional improvements to our schools," Wheaton explained, "but we need the community to weigh in on priorities."

The consultants will provide an overview and then open the program to the public for questions and comments.

For more information, call Visalia Unified School District at 730-7300.

Cranes

Continued from p. 4

"So far, the numbers are right where we expect them to be," he said.

Sandhill cranes and other visiting birds tend to visit the same winter habitat every year. They mate for life, winter in the same spot, and migrate to the same summer breeding area together. Juveniles often stay with their parents for the first year or two of their lives, until they reach maturity. Whether the same amount of birds will stay at the refuge this winter, or relocate if there is not enough habitat, is not yet known.

Other birdlife seen at the refuge include a variety of ducks, Canada geese, white-faced ibis, a variety of shorebirds, hawks and owls. Jimenez said he spotted a golden eagle flying above the 6,400-acre refuge. Various reptiles including rattlesnakes, and mammals such as coyote, skunk and ground squirrels also live there. Some species of birds maintain permanent residency there including mallard ducks, American coots and some species of sparrows.

Nearby Kern National Wildlife Refuge is about 20 miles south of the Pixley refuge, and is maintained by the same USFWS office. While there is quite a variety of wildlife there also, no sandhill cranes winter there. Contributing factors could include the different neighboring farmland being mostly planted in less desirable feeding grounds of pistachios versus alfalfa, and the fact that duck hunting, during normal non-drought years, is allowed at the Kern refuge, Jimenez said.

Both preserves are open to the public daily from sunrise to sunset year-round. The Pixley refuge has a one-and-a-half mile walking loop with an observation deck to view the wildlife. The nearly 2,000-acre Kern refuge has a six-mile, all-weather gravel driving road through the habitat, which can also be used as a foot path. Here too, the normal water usage will be cut to 65%. Duck hunting will not be allowed this year, because of the reduced amount of habitat.

Along with most everyone in Central California, a normal or above average amount of rainfall would be much appreciated by these refuges and the USFWS that maintains them. This would allow for more normal winter habitat for the wildlife and help restore the much needed ground water levels for the future.

In honor of the sandhill cranes returning to their winter home in the South Valley, the Pixley National Wildlife Refuge will host its annual "Welcome Back the Cranes" event on Saturday, November 8, from 3:30 to dusk.

Staff of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for the Pixley and Kern refuges invite human visitors to meet at the parking lot of the Pixley refuge to learn more about current events at each of the refuges, to socialize and for light refreshments. Staff-led walks will proceed to the observation deck near dusk, to watch thousands of sandhill cranes fly-in to their nighttime roost. The cranes stay at the preserve, but fly to local fields during the day to forage for food.

Last year, 200 people attended the event. More are definitely welcome and there is no cost to attend. If you go, wear sturdy, comfortable shoes, layers of clothing in case it gets cold, and a flashlight.

For more information and reservations, call the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service local office at 661-725-2767.

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Viewpoint

Hong Kong on the Brink

Mel Gurtov

The tense situation in Hong Kong is at a critical juncture. The protesters have made plain that they are there to stay, though their numbers are dwindling. They are demanding that the Beijing-appointed chief executive, Leung Chun-ying, resign. They want China to live up to its promise that elections in 2017 will be freely contested, not constrained by being limited to Beijing-approved candidates.

Hong Kong's student leader Joshua Wong recently called for international support in forcing Beijing to participate in negotiations for universal suffrage. The British and American governments have expressed "concern" and sympathy for the demonstrators, but Beijing will easily deflect such "interference in China's internal affairs," as the criticism will be called. Already, as happened in June 1989, the Beijing press has seen "the hand of Western powers" in the demonstrations, insisting that the Western media invented the term "umbrella revolution" just as it invented "color revolution" and "jasmine revolution." But, will the outcome be an "Umbrella Revolution" or another Tiananmen?

An ominous sign of a potential police crackdown is use of the word "chaos" in Renmin ribao (People's Daily, the official newspaper) to describe Hong Kong events. "Chaos" (luan) was the word used in the spring of 1989 to signal the Beijing leadership's unwillingness to let the protests at Tiananmen drag on indefinitely. The word has a particular resonance in China: Its tumultuous modern history is replete with failed efforts to unify the country and prevent the formation of secret political cliques and factions. In the lead up to the Tiananmen crackdown, top leaders signaled through the press that the students were causing chaos and that "turmoil" would not be tolerated. Although Premier Zhao Ziyang met with students in the square, earning 16 years under house arrest, supreme leader Deng Xiaoping convinced his colleagues that the demonstrations were a threat and had to be put down. Martial law followed.

Beijing is following the same script today. Editorials on October 1 and 3 in Renmin ribao's online editions dwelled on the demonstrators' "illegal assembly" and "absurd and crazy kidnapping" of law and order. The protesters are being called an "extremist opposition group" that is not only breaking the law but also threatening to disrupt years of prosperity and stability.

The editorials scoff at the protesters' talk of democracy and freedom, saying, "freedom without order isn't real freedom, and will lead to social disharmony and instability." Far from suggesting a path to compromise, the editorials are a warning of potential use of force.

Beijing's chief concern is the domino effect of lending legitimacy to the pro-democracy forces. Even if it does not concede on the election issue, it no doubt wants to avoid appearing weak in the face of a popular protest. Beijing knows people in Taiwan, Tibet and other parts of its self-proclaimed realm are watching for signs of flexibility, and successful demonstrations in Hong Kong might be followed by more of the same elsewhere in China, just as happened in 1989.

While Beijing has apparently ruled out concessions, it has authorized Hong Kong's executive secretary to meet with some students. But to meet does not signify when or what to negotiate. Finding a face-saving formula will be extremely difficult, particularly since the demonstrators have no leaders, no common program and no agreed-upon end game. Should talks fail, or not be held, the opposition will face a choice: Go home, hang on and risk losing public support, or escalate pressure such as by seizing an official building or office.

Beijing will do whatever is "necessary" to bring the Hong Kong situation under control. But will this be another Tiananmen? Hong Kong's people have numbers, drive and access to information technologies not available in 1989. Beijing will not be able to erase the "umbrella revolution" from national memory or discourse; social and new media will widely broadcast even the smallest slip-ups. And if the students and others do go home, chances are they'll be back another time—and another. If Beijing wants to save face in the long term, it should honor its commitment to free elections and not interfere in the nomination process or the outcome.

More Students, More Schools!

Craig Wheaton, Ed.D.

As many of you know, Visalia Unified School District serves over 28,000 students, and we continue to grow. In order to keep up with the growing community, we just broke ground on the fifth middle school. That middle school will be complete and open in August 2016. A growth trend is a good indicator of a healthy economy; but with growth, there are also challenges. One of the challenges we face in the next few months is to develop the school boundary for the new middle school. This is not an easy task.

As a school district, we monitor school enrollments; and over the last few years, we have taken several steps to reduce overcrowding at some middle schools and high schools. Our community has grown more on the western side of town and left some of our school enrollments below facility capacity while overcrowding others. It is time we took a "big picture" view of the school district and made some adjustments so that our school enrollments are better balanced. This step will maximize the use of our existing schools and limit the number of new schools needed as we move forward from here.

The Board of Trustees adopted "Guiding Principles" to assist in the boundary adjustment process and draft maps were developed according to these principles: consider demographic balances, maintain existing "feeder patterns," maintain existing neighborhoods and minimize the number of schools and students impacted by changes, as well as looking closely at transportation costs and safe student routes to school. As maps were developed, it became obvious that some of these "principles" were a bit contradictory and it was not possible to achieve all of the guiding principles in one or two single boundary maps.

All of this is a long way to say that changing school boundaries is a complicated process and one that requires compromise. The Board of Trustees approved several versions of maps for a larger community conversation. Over the next several months, meetings will be held in each section of town (based at each middle school and/or high school) to gather comments and input regarding the boundary maps. These input sessions will provide the Board of Trustees with valuable information as they seek to approve the boundaries that best meet the needs of the district as a whole.

The goal and timeline is to have this process complete by spring so that parents and students know of any changes in school boundaries a full 18 months before they go into effect. If you would like more information on this process or specific dates of the public meetings, visit our website www.vusd.org or Facebook page www.facebook.com/VisaliaUSD, or email me at cwheaton@vusd.org.

Craig Wheaton, Ed.D., is superintendent of the Visalia Unified School District.

How Rich Are the 400 Richest Americans – and What Do They Do with Their Money?

Lawrence S. Wittner

In the supposedly classless society of the United States, the wealthiest Americans are doing remarkably well.

According to *Forbes*, a leading business magazine, the combined wealth of the 400 richest Americans has now reached the staggering total of $2.3 trillion. This gives them an average net worth of $5.7 billion--an increase of 14% over the previous year.

With fortunes far beyond the dreams of past kings and potentates, these super-wealthy individuals enjoy extraordinary lifestyles. Larry Ellison, the third wealthiest man in the United States (with $50 billion, an increase of 22%) reportedly has "15 or so homes scattered all around the world." Among his yachts are two exceptionally big ones, each over half as long as a football field. In fact, they're large enough for him to play basketball while on board. If a ball bounces over the rail, Ellison has a powerboat following along to retrieve it.

Other Americans aren't doing nearly as well. According to the Census Bureau, more than 45 million Americans are living in poverty, which it defines as under $11,490 a year for an individual and under $23,550 for a family of four. Many of them endure lives of hunger, misery and despair, helped along by a Congress that has slashed billions from government food stamp programs, ended extended unemployment benefits, and refused to raise the minimum wage.

America's middle class, plagued by stagnant income and declining wealth, has also suffered. According to the Federal Reserve, between 2010 and 2013, median income in the United States fell by 5%. Indeed, since 1989, the median net worth of the statistical middle class--the middle 20 percent of Americans--has dropped by nearly 18%.

Not surprisingly, economic inequality is growing in the United States. From 1978 to 2013, CEO compensation, inflation-adjusted, grew by 937%, while the typical worker's compensation over that same period grew by only 10%. Thus, although the CEO-to-worker compensation ratio was 20-to-1 in 1965, it stood at 296-to-1 in 2013. The same pattern prevails when it comes to wealth. From 1989 to 2013, the wealthiest 3% of Americans increased their share of the wealth from 44.8% to 54.4%, while the bottom 90% found their share of the wealth dropping from 33.2% to 24.7%. Today, the United States has the fourth most uneven income distribution among economically developed nations.

Against this backdrop, Americans might consider whether the richest among them really deserve their privileged status. After all, many of them have simply inherited great wealth and sat back as it grew still greater. Others, such as owners of multinational corporations, have acquired vast wealth through government favors, including financial subsidies, tax breaks and expensive weapons procurement programs. Still others have "earned" their wealth through employment of dubious value. According to Forbes, the top "industry" among the 400 richest Americans is "investments." Are these stock market and hedge fund speculators really the most valuable members of American society?

Also, many of the wealthiest Americans have grown richer at the expense of others. In 2005, Larry Ellison (#three, of the giant yachts) bought out PeopleSoft, an 11,000-employee competitor, and then eliminated the jobs of 5,000 of them. Or consider the four members of the Walton family--owners of Wal-Mart, the country's biggest private employer--who rank among the top 10 richest Americans, with a combined net worth of $143.7 billion. Most of their full-time workers are paid less than $25,000 a year. Wal-Mart's cashiers, for example, average $8.48 an hour, and thousands of Wal-Mart workers receive no more than the minimum wage ($7.25 an hour). These low wages keep many of the company's workers mired in poverty and dependent upon government assistance. Indeed, it is estimated that Wal-Mart's low-wage workers cost American taxpayers $6.2 billion a year in public assistance, including food stamps, Medicaid, and subsidized housing.

Furthermore, the richest Americans often use their wealth to campaign against the public good. Pre-eminent among them are Charles and David Koch, the sons of a wealthy founder of the John Birch Society, as well as the fourth and fifth richest Americans (with $84 billion). Over the years, the Koch brothers have used their vast wealth to champion the abolition of public schools, the postal system, minimum wage laws, Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, the Food and Drug Administration, and the Environmental Protection Agency. Bankrolling a broad variety of rightwing groups and foundations, they have zealously opposed legislation providing for environmental protection, health care reform, and limits on campaign contributions. As massive financers of rightwing election campaigns--including more than $400 million to candidates in 2011-2012 alone--they have been very effective in pulling the Republican Party and American politics rightward.

Even Americans who place some of their enormous wealth in tax-exempt foundations often use them for questionable purposes. Since 2008, the Gates Foundation--funded by Bill Gates (the nation's wealthiest individual, with $81 billion)--has spent at least $2 billion to undermine public schools by promoting charter schools, high-stakes standardized testing and other corporate educational initiatives. The Gates Foundation has also played a key role in creating organizations opposing teacher unions and teacher tenure.

Meanwhile, the Walton Foundation contributed more than $750 million to these efforts. In Milwaukee, the Walton Foundation funded the organizations that developed and pushed through that city's school voucher program. In addition, both the Gates and Walton Foundations have funded the work of ALEC, the rightwing operation that has successfully promoted the passage of state laws that restrict voting rights, weaken unions, privatize education, harass immigrants, encourage "Stand Your Ground" behavior, and, of course, provide big tax cuts for the rich.

Americans talk fondly of equality, but, to paraphrase a statement in George Orwell's satire about another allegedly classless society, in this country some people are more equal than others.

Lawrence Wittner (http://lawrenceswittner.com), syndicated by PeaceVoice, is Professor of History emeritus at SUNY/Albany. His latest book is What's Going On at UAardvark? *(Solidarity Press), a satirical novel about campus life.*

Columns & Letters

Letter: Concern Over Porterville Police

While the Porterville City Council has many issues before them, they seem to confuse themselves as to what action to take. It seems that the lack of experience leads them from arriving to a decision, as to whether they should ignore or address and find solutions to what ever the community concerns are?. At last night's council meeting (October 21, 2014) several attendees presented comments on the upset and nagitive affect the community is experiencing after the removal of the Police Chief. Not so much the fact that he was removed, (because that was a step in the right direction), but rather the reasons behind it. The allegations that have since surfaced in the community is that there was misappropriation of public funds regarding the Porterville City Police Explorer Program, allegations of a hostile working enviorement within the department, several lawsuits, crimes not being reported or taken action upon which involved department personnel, the gatherings involving liquior being served at (which is now being referred to as the "Porterville Police Club House" near the Porterville Airport) and how paid personnel is assigned to the area against their desire,to maintain the premises. It is said, that after a Complaint to the Grand Jury, resulted in the findings being referred to the District Attorney's office and that the DA channeled said findings to the Porterville City Manager for review (again, the fox guarding the henhouse), which utimately, at it is rumored that the city manager visited the illegal site to confirm the allegation and gave the city manager no choice, but to place the Chief on Administrative Leave. The city manager since gave the Chief the option to retire effective in December. The community does not feel that any public employee should be entitled to PERS Retirement Benefits if it is found that the individual has in fact committed a crime. In addressing the city council on the police department scandal and that of the excessive fees surrounding the Medical Marijuana issue the Porterville Recorder has ignore to print any comments on the topics. Furthermore, the local radio station KTIP, has also ignored to report on any comments. The handling of the findings and recommendations of the Tulare County Grand Jury being forwarded to the Tulare County District Attorney is a common practice of ignorance, knowing that the District Attorney will never abided by his responsiblity and obligation to follow the law (at least not this Distirct Attorney). At the March 23, 2014 District Attorney's Forum in Porterville, sponsored by El Centro Mexicano, American Latino, Tulare County District Attorney TIM WARD said that no one was above the law, and that he stood to prosecute anyone regardless of status, who violated the law. Maybe, the community made a huge mistake not to elect Attorney Ralph Keible to do a man's job. At the council meeting I also challenged Councilwomen Virgina Gurrola running for 5th District Supervisor on her asking the community for their vote on November 4th. I informed Madam Gurrola, that if she wants support from the community, she had to earn it, and do the right thing and look into the police scandal, and that it was the responsiblity of the entire city council to provide answers to the community surrounding the scandal. The City Manager works for the council, and council represents the communtiy. I also reminded Gurrola that Mike Ennis was advised of a previous Grand Jury Investigation which was moved on or about August of 2012 and he ignored to look into it, (what about it,Mikey, give up that taxpayers phone, "Use it or Lose it"). The findings and recommendations of the investigation were also forwarded to District Attorney TIM WARD, who neglected to take action. My question is, "Are the elected doing what they have promised their constituents to do", or are, as always…….just blowing smoke up their axx. I further noticed the current police chief intermin, and the comment he has made over the radio, in saying that he found the Porterville Police Department to be very professional and that he was glad to temporarily join the force, what could he be referring to……..professional criminals?????????? "Please, Chief, as a respected community leader you need to man up and do the right thing, the public is not stupid,……need I say more,….. No harm intended, just honesty".

John Duran

Letter: Everyday Heroes

Editor,

Cable technicians are rarely considered every day heroes. But given that we come into your homes and are on the road all day, we can find ourselves cast in different roles when there is an emergency in the community. During a typical work shift in Visalia, a Comcast technician and member of my team, Zach Gatson, found himself in this role when he was en route to a service job. As he was driving, he noticed a woman on the ground in the distance and as he got closer, realized her and her young granddaughter were being attached by a pit bull. Zach jumped out of his van and ran towards the woman who was screaming for help to protect "her baby." Without hesitation, Zach intervened and scooped up the little girl, running back to put her in his work van out of harm's way while the dog chased them down. Zach managed to calm the dog down and in the meantime, another Comcast maintenance technician who was working nearby, rushed over to assist and calm the grandmother, who had received serious wounds, while Zach dialed 911. Zach remained with the mother until the police and ambulance arraived on scene.

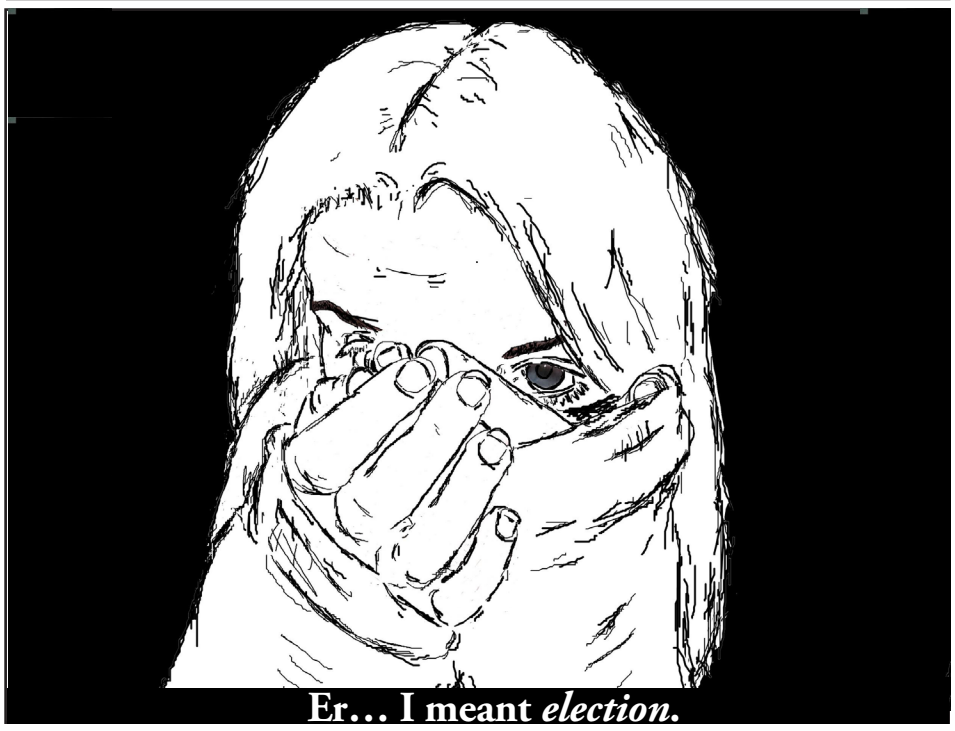
These days, it's rare to find stories like Zach's, of people willing to go above and beyond their job description and jump in to help a fellow community member during an average work day. It's good to know we have these every day heroes right around the corner here in Visalia and I'm proud to have Zach as part of my team.

Gene Aldape
Comcast Employee, 27 years

Send us your Letters to the Editor
By mail: 208 W. Main, Ste. E, Visalia, CA 93291
By email: editor@ourvalleyvoice.com

Black Tie

Alex Oldenbourg



Er… I meant *election.*

Veteran's Corner

Veterans Day Events

Joe Wright

Veterans Day, November 11, is set aside to thank and honor all men and women who served honorably in the military. In fact, Veterans Day is largely intended to thank living Veterans for their service, to acknowledge that their contributions to our national security are appreciated, and to underscore the fact that all those who served – not only those who died – have sacrificed and done their duty. As we salute America's heroes on Veterans Day, there are many activities the community is encouraged to participate in.

On November 5, Lemoore High School is hosting the 22nd Annual Patriotic Concert, "Courage on the Home Front." The concert is at the Lemoore High School Event Center and begins at 7pm. Donations will be accepted as well as canned food and new baby items.

On November 6, West Hills College Lemoore is hosting a Veterans Day 2014 Root Beer Float Social from 2 until 3:30pm, in front of the Administration Building at West Hills College Lemoore. They will be collecting hygiene product donations that will go to local homeless veterans. RSVP by calling 925-3341.

On Veterans Day, November 11, the Hanford Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 5869 will host the Third Annual Veterans Festival at the Kings County Fairgrounds. The Festival starts at 10:30am and runs until 4pm. There will be music, food, raffles throughout the day, motorcycle and car clubs, bounce houses, drill team competition and numerous other family-oriented activities. There is a Veteran "Stand Down" from 8 to 10am. Admission and parking are free.

On November 11, American Legion Post 3 is also conducting a Veterans Day Service at the Hanford Cemetery "Tank" at 10am. This event will be followed by a potluck lunch at the Veterans Hall in Hanford. For more information, call 583-1169. Fleet Reserve Post 261 in Lemoore is hosting a Veterans Day potluck at 12:30pm at the Club 261 in Lemoore.

To finish up the day, the City of Lemoore and American Legion Post 100 are hosting the Veterans Day Parade in Downtown Lemoore at 6pm. The parade is free to participate as long as the entrant maintains a patriotic theme. For more information, call Lemoore Parks and Recreation at 924-6767.

The Kings County Veterans Service Office issues Veteran ID cards to honorably discharged veterans. Contact Joe Wright if you would like to receive periodic veteran's information by email. There are many state and federal benefits and programs available to veterans and their dependents. To find out if you are eligible for any of these benefits, visit or call our office. We can and will assist you in completing all required application forms. You can get information on the web from the Kings County Veterans Service Office webpage at www.countyofkings.com.

Joe Wright, retired Navy Master Chief Petty Officer, is the Veterans Service Officer for Kings County. Send your questions to the Veterans Service Office, 1400 W. Lacey Blvd., Hanford, CA 93230; call 852-

"I know this guy neil he had been ther along time ..I was homeless and had no ware ells to go during the summer of 2013. So me my girl and my dog would go ther just to get out of the hot sun of the day…just a nice place to BBQ and play in the water with the dog.And this man was so mean he has no hart for pepple or life of any kind..all he cares about is that dum desk golf I thank he needs to steep down…he's workng a job he dose not desurve……all that desk golf is doing is messing up the park and brenging bad pepple to the park. ……..SAVE A LIFE ..fire nile … and trash the DESk GOlF… Just tell me how I can help get this hatefull man out of the park …I know ther has to be anather man that can do this job and do it beter..: know of 2 guye the work out ther the wold be bater for the job …"

— Billy Cindy Liam And dog, on Oval Park Fundraising Effort

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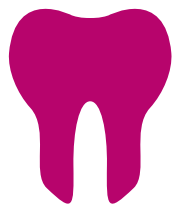

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Apple Annie's
1165 N. Blackstone St.
Nov. 12, 19, 24 at 10 a.m.
Dec. 3 at 10 a.m.

VISALIA
Marie Callender's
350 S. Mooney Blvd.
Nov. 12 at 2:30 p.m.
Dec. 3 at 10 a.m.

VISALIA
Denny's
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Valley Voice
Valley Scene

Kids' Festival 2014 to Take Over Visalia Convention Center on November 22

Staff Reports

It's all about South Valley children and their families when Kids' Festival 2014 returns to the Visalia Convention Center from 9am to 4pm on Saturday, November 22nd. This year's theme is "Science and Technology," and the exhibitors of Kids' Festival plan to uphold the tradition of engaging the children with things to do and see from start to finish.

Kids Festival 2014 highlights will include:

- The Riata Ranch Cowboy Girls, who have performed in 19 countries, on five different continents, from rodeo arena dirt to professional sporting arena turf. From Windsor Castle in England where they performed for Queen Elizabeth for her Diamond Jubilee Pageant celebrating her 60 years of service, to Montevideo, Uruguay, where the Riata Team appeared on behalf of the U.S. Embassy to promote professional rodeo and ranching lifestyles.
- Sierra Performing Arts, a group of dedicated performers, will showcase their talent.
- Kids Edition, which features a wide range of dance programs for children, will appear on the main stage.
- American Traveling Carnival will offer rides for children and adults inside the main exhibit hall and on the convention center patio at the entrance to the show. Back by popular demand are the Kids' Festival Fun House, Children's Cars, and the Apple Ride.

Kids' Festival 2014 will include hands-on science events.

- Dance Arts, which features ballet, tap, jazz, hip-hop and gymnastics for children age 3 through adult, will perform.
- SCICON will present all kinds of interesting things to see and touch.
- U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, which last year brought their mascot, "Bobber," and their sleek, twin engine 25-foot boat and trailer that they use at Lake Kaweah.
- Farley`s Elite Tae Kwon Do will put on a demonstration.
- Character Counts!, a nationwide initiative which embraces six core values common to a democratic society that allows teachers, parents and community members to build and develop character in youth.
- ImagineU Children's Museum will present a children's booth display.

The Title Sponsor is the Tulare County Office of Education, Presenting Sponsor is Food 4 Less of Visalia and the Big Screen Sponsor is McDonalds Restaurants of Visalia. Event sponsors include: Visalia Unified School District, *The Visalia Times-Delta* and *Tulare Advance-Register*, Educational Employees Credit Union, California Highway Patrol, Riata Ranch International, Promise FM, Spirit 88.9.

Special guests include ImagineU Children's Museum, Sequoia Council of the Boy Scouts of America. Educational participants are Golden West High School Marketing Department, Burton School District Science Department and Redwood High School Science Department.

Free to children under 12 and a special student rate of $3 for students up to 17, Kids' Festival will be held in the Main Exhibit Hall of the Visalia Convention Center, as well as in the patio and the exhibition hall lobbies. Adult admission is $7, with discount coupons available through the event's major sponsors.

Tulare County Symphony to Perform 'Final Chords' on November 22

Donna Orozco

The Tulare County Symphony has titled its November concert "Final Chords" because it features Tchaikovsky's last symphony and Elgar's final concerto. The concert will be Saturday, November 22 at 7:30 p.m. at the Visalia Fox Theatre.

Cicely Parnas

The first short piece, "March Slave," begins with a familiar tune. Tchaikovsky was commissioned to write it in 1876 to benefit wounded Serbian veterans during the Serbo-Turkish War. Toward the end of the piece, there are a few bars of the "1812 Overture" thrown in.

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Tchaikovsky's "Symphony No. 6" was his final completed symphony. The composer led the first performance in St. Petersburg and died nine days later. Although some say the piece had the feel of a suicide note, Tchaikovsky specialist David Brown suggests that the symphony deals with the power of fate in life and death.

And Tchaikovsky regarded his new symphony with great affection, saying, "I think it will be successful; it is rare for me to write anything with such love and enthrallment. I can honestly say that never in my life have I been so pleased with myself, so proud, or felt so fortunate to have created something as good as this."

Elgar's "Cello Concerto" will feature a young and upcoming cellist, Cicely Parnas. When the then 19-year-old Parnas performed Elgar's "Cello Concerto" in two performances in January 2013 in Vermont, soon after performing a different piece at Carnegie Hall, a review said, "Parnas wowed the audience with a virtuosic and passionate performance of Elgar's brooding concerto. She is certainly an artist to watch and enjoy."

Elgar began the concerto in 1918 after undergoing an operation in London to have an infected tonsil removed, a dangerous operation for a 61-year-old man. When he regained consciousness after sedation, he asked for pencil and paper, and wrote down the melody that would become the first theme from the concerto.

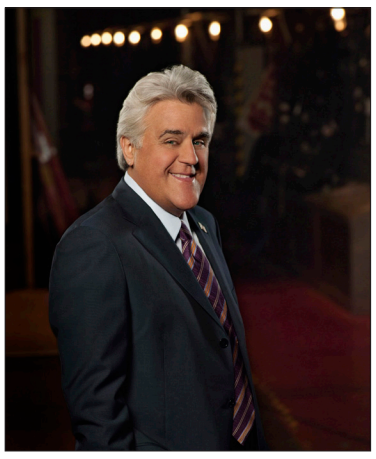
The work is very simple, a style that was seen in Elgar's music in his last couple of years, but with a profound wisdom and beauty underlying its simplicity.

Tickets are $30 to $39.50 at the symphony office, 208 W. Main St., Suite D, Visalia, downstairs in Montgomery Square. Student prices are $10. Tickets are also available at 732-8600 and at www.tularecountysymphony.com.

The audience is invited to come early at 6:45pm to hear music director Bruce Kiesling's pre-concert talk.

Jay Leno Set to Headline Tachi Palace on November 13

Acclaimed TV late night show host, stand-up comedian, best-selling children's book author, much-in-demand corporate speaker, TV and movie voice-over artist, pioneering car builder and philanthropist Jay Leno will take the stage at Tachi Palace in Lemoore for a 7:30pm concert on Thursday, November 13.


Jay Leno

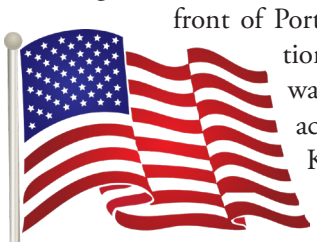
Often characterized as "the hardest working man in show business," Leno's late night television ratings domination included more than two decades of "The Tonight Show with Jay Leno," winning every consecutive quarter of his hosting over 19 years. He is the recipient of the People's Choice Award and other honors, including the Harris Poll selection as most popular star on television. Other personal highlights include his induction into the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences' Broadcasting Hall of Fame, his reception of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts' Mark Twain Prize for American Humor, the Hasty Pudding Award at Harvard University (an honor whose sole prior comedy/talk host recipient was Johnny Carson) and an honorary doctorate from his alma mater, Emerson College.

Leno, who has been invited to have his papers installed in the Library of Congress, has also received a star on Hollywood's Walk of Fame (asking that it be placed in front of the Ripley's Believe It Or Not Museum where he was arrested for vagrancy when he first arrived in Hollywood). He also has set several land speed records and became the first person to drive the pace car of all major NASCAR events.

For tickets or more information, visit www.tachipalace.com/entertainment.php.

Porterville to Celebrate Veterans Day with Parade, Run

The annual Porterville Veterans Day Parade will be held on Tuesday, November 11, in Downtown Porterville, beginning at 10am. The event, cosponsored by American Legion Post 20 and Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 2001, will travel along Main Street, from Morton Avenue to Walnut Avenue.



The parade will feature floats, 14 bands and various community groups, including scout troops and other youth organizations.

The Porterville Veterans Day Run will precede the parade, beginning at 7:15am. The run starts and finishes in front of Porterville City Hall. Registration is $23 for runners, $18 for walkers, $10 for veterans and active duty military, and the Kids' Fun Run is free.

For more information about the parade, call 784-6554. For more information about the run, visit www.ci.porterville.ca.us/depts/ParksandLeisure/vetsrun.cfm.

34th Annual Christmas Tree Auction Set for December 12

Generosity and grandeur will combine when the Visalia Chamber of Commerce presents "Babes in Toyland" – the 34th Annual Christmas Tree Auction – set to kick off Friday, December 12, at the Visalia Convention Center.

The chamber's Annual Christmas Tree Auction has become a local Holiday tradition. Each year, more than 900 people dress up in their finest holiday party clothes and kick off the season with a giving spirit. The Christmas Tree Auction is the only formal event open to the public in the city and features a sit-down dinner, dancing, entertainment and wine tasting.

The Christmas Tree Auction raises awareness and donations for local non-profit organizations. More than $4 million has been raised for local charities in the last 30+ years. Last year's event alone brought in nearly $200,000 in donations. For participating non-profits, this is the primary fundraising mechanism, underscoring the significance of this annual event, and its impact on the budgets of local non-profit organizations.

"Kaweah Delta Hospice Foundation is once again excited to participate in the auction," said Barbara Mayeda, chairman of the Christmas Tree Auction committee. "Kaweah Delta Hospice Foundation uses the Christmas Tree Auction as its major fundraiser for the year. The chamber-hosted event saves us the time and labor of doing our own event, so that we are able to concentrate our efforts on getting our donors to donate."

This year, attendees have the choice to attend the Christmas Tree Auction on a general admission ticket or as VIP guest. General admission includes: wine tasting, hors d'oeuvres, silent auction dessert and dancing. The VIP ticket includes: a sit-down dinner, Live Christmas Tree Auction, wine tasting, hors d'oeuvres, silent auction, dessert and dancing. General admission tickets are $65 (7:30-11:30pm) while VIP tickets are $135 (5:30-11:30 pm). Tickets may be purchased at the Visalia Chamber of Commerce: 220 N. Santa Fe St, 734-5876 or at www.visaliachamber.org

Volunteers are preparing to decorate more than 13 live Christmas trees to be auctioned off as well as silent auction items for the benefit of the following local charities: CASA of Tulare County, Community Educational Broadcasting, Daughters of Hope, Family Services of Tulare County, Golden State Family Services, International Agri-Center, Kaweah Delta Foundation LifeLine, Kaweah Delta Hospice Foundation, Love In the Name of Christ, Mt. Whitney Jazz Band Boosters, NAMI, Redwood High School Mock Trial, Samaritan Center Clinic, Sisterhood of Grace, Spirit 88.9, United Way of Tulare County, Valley Life Foundation, Visalia Education Foundation andVisalia Rescue Mission.

This year, the Community Giving Tree sponsored by Groppetti Automotive will return as another opportunity for attendees to help a local non-profit. Attendees may purchase tickets to win the giving tree leading up to the evening of the auction. At the end of the evening one ticket will be chosen and the winning individual will have the opportunity to donate all of the ticket proceeds from the Giving Tree to a local charity of their choosing.

Sponsorship opportunities for the Christmas Tree Auction are available for interested businesses. Call the chamber at 734-5876 for details.

Visalia Players to Present 'Side By Side By Sondheim'

The Visalia Players' production of "Side By Side By Sondheim" offers zany and fast-paced entertainment for the entire family. Produced in the Lobby of the Ice House Theatre, the musical comedy is an intimate look at Sondheim's work during the first half of his illustrious 50-year career as a lyricist and composer.

Director Sharon DeCoux, who is no novice when it comes to directing, acting and mounting theatrical productions, admits, "This is the fourth time, I've directed this show. Despite the fact that I haven't a musical bone in my body, I know how to stage musicals, and I know what I want. I depend heavily on my musical director to see that my visions come to fruition."

DeCoux is capably supported in the current production by Merina Amos as musical director. Amos has a degree in vocal performance and has performed with opera companies throughout California. Amos notes that Sondheim is a particularly interesting lyricist/composer in that "at a time when most Broadway shows were featuring light heartedness and happy endings, Sondheim was interested in showing life as it really is. He became universal because of his focus."

DeCoux selected Corey Ralston, who recently directed the very popular "Bonnie and Clyde," as her co-director. "I'm happy to help Sharon," said Ralston. "I am not normally drawn to Sondheim, preferring rock and pop musicals, but as we rehearse, I'm gaining an appreciation for his work."

Although Sondheim is known as a composer, his abilities as a poet originally brought him to fame when he wrote the lyrics for "West Side Story." As his career progressed, he was frequently both the composer and lyricist as was true for such successes as "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum," "Company" and "A Little Night Music."

Songs from these popular shows and more are showcased in "Side By Side By Sondheim." The revue features a narrator who provides interesting insights into what happens with a show on its way to Broadway. The music is performed by Richard (Rick) Adamson, Marla Alberstein, Amos, Darleen Hampson, Ralston, Craig Wilson and Megan Wright.The singers are supported by two pianos led by Ayla Draper.

On Sunday, November 23 after the matinee, "Back Stage at the Ice House" will be hosted by Leeni Mitchell, a veteran Visalia Player. Audience members will have an opportunity for a behind the scenes look at the show and the opportunity to ask questions and interact with cast/crew.

Side By Side By Sondheim runs for three weekends at the Ice House Theater at Race and Santa Fe in Visalia. Evening performances are at 7:30pm on November 14, 15, 21, 22, 28 and 29, and matinees are at 2pm on November 16, 23 30. To purchase tickets, visit www.visaliaplayers.org, the Facebook page "Visalia Community Players," or call 734-3900.

Tulare County Museum Hosts Italian Heritage Exhibit

"Passion Produces Excellence: Commemorating Italian Experiences in Tulare County" is now on display at in the History of Tulare County Farm Labor and Agriculture Museum in Mooney Grove Park in Visalia.

The museum collaborated with members of the local Italian community to create this display that tells the story of the influence that this community has had on Tulare County.

"In 1930, these Italian immigrants formed Roma Lodge to carry on the Italian Culture in Tulare County," said Larry Dutto, provost of the COS Tulare College Center. "The lodge has been active for the Order of the Sons of Italy in America for 85 years."

Photographs and artifacts from local Italian families showcase the Italian culture, and include a wide variety of elements such as items used in the dairy business, grape industry and walnut production, items that give recognition to strong ambition and family heirlooms from Italy.

"Early settlers to Tulare County came to this area because of the rich agriculture lands," said Dutto. "Many of these early immigrants were farmers and dairymen who came from Italy with the knowledge and hard work they needed to build their businesses."

Admission to the park and the museum is free. For more information, call Amy King, curator of the museum, at 733-6616.

Want to Write a Novel in November?

National Novel Writing Month (NaNoWriMo), the largest writing event in the world, challenges people to write 50,000 words of a novel in the 30 days of November. More than half a million people on all seven continents (including Antarctica) are expected to participate.

The Visalia Branch of the Tulare County Library is serving as a "Come Write In" space, offering its meeting room and light refreshments during selected dates throughout the month of November. Tuesday Write Ins will be on November 18 and 25 from noon to 3pm. Thursday Write Ins will be on November 6, 13 and 20 from 4:30-7:30pm. Both sessions will be held in the Visalia Branch Purple Room. A Thank God It's Over wrap-up party will be held on Saturday, December 6 from 2-4:30pm in the Visalia Branch Blue Room.

NaNoWriMo is celebrating its 16th year of empowering diverse voices with supporting writers in the classroom, and building creative-writing communities around the world. This year, 816 liaisons will coordinate in-person write-ins, turning local coffee shops, bookstores and living rooms into writing havens.

For more information, visit nanowrimo.org and tularecountylibrary.org, or call 713-2703.

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Sound N Vision Presents Three Downtown Visalia Shows

New York singer-songwriter troubadour Jeffrey Lewis, who will perform a free all-ages show at 6pm on Saturday, November 8, at Velouria Records, 109 E. Main St., Visalia, is an artist in every sense of the word – from his comic books that depict his life experiences to his personal songs; both of which will be available at this in-store performance.

Jeffrey Lewis

L.A-based creative force Emily Lacy will play the middle slot. She's a folk and electronic sound artist generating works in music, film and other media. She has performed in exhibitions at PS1 MOMA, the Whitney Museum of American Art and LACMA, in addition to various DIY spaces all throughout America.

Cheers Elephant

Twin Peaks

Kicking off the music at 6pm will be Visalia's own singer-songwriter Andrew Kenefick.

That evening, Cheers Elephant will perform at The Cellar Door, 101 W. Main St., at 8pm. Tickets are $5 and available at Ticketweb.com. Cheers Elephant is a tight, rootsy, psychedelic pop-rock quartet from the Los Angeles area that digs deep into three-part harmonies and pop song arrangements.

foot of feathers, which opens the show, is Visalia's own California pop-nostalgia-vibe delivering big vocal harmony.

Simply put, Chicago's Twin Peaks, which headlines The Cellar Door on Friday, November 14, is a young group of dudes that love to rock. In two short years, the band has released two critically acclaimed albums and built a loyal fanbase across the U.S.

The opening band, L.A.'s Meatbodies, are led by Chad Ubovich, who also rocks in FUZZ, a band he has with Ty Segall. Over the past few months, Ubovich has been putting all of his efforts in Meatbodies. Their new self-titled album was just featured on NPR's "First Listen," and is currently being spun on satellite and college radio nationwide.

Tickets for this all-ages 7pm show are $7 in advance or $10 at the door. For more info, visit snvfoundation.org.

The Oh Hellos

The Oh Hellos to Perform at Radiant Church

The Oh Hellos are headlining their own tour and selling out shows left and right. This ten-piece touring ensemble, which will perform at Radiant Church in Visalia on November 13, is composed of the sibling duo, Maggie and Tyler Heath — intentionally independent self-produced musicians hailing from Texas.

The siblings bend and blend styles and genres into a unique mixture of eclectic folk rock. Their ability to weave a sound that is one moment intimate, the next explosive and joyful, will fill the intimate, 500-capacity space at Radiant Church.

"They're not a Christian band," said promoter Ryan Stillwater of Rainmaker Productions. "Radiant is just a great room and has a desire to be an open invitation to those who otherwise wouldn't attend church."

The 14-piece Greensboro, North Carolina group, The Collection, is supporting the tour with a complimentary sound meant to really get feet stompin' and heads bobbin'. Visalia favorites The Gospel Whiskey Runners will kick the night off at 5:30pm.

Tickets are on-sale for $12.50 at ticketfly.com and at the Radiant Church office, 515 E. Center Ave., Visalia. For more information, visit rainmakerpro.net.

Visalia Opera Company to Stage Mariachi Opera

There are few small towns with their own opera companies. There are even fewer small towns with an opera company that is brave enough to join traditional Mexican music together with opera to create a new artform, a mariachi opera.

The Visalia Opera Company has been in existence for over four years and has two fully staged operas under its belt. At 11am on November 15 in Oval Park in Visalia, the opera company will undertake "El Bracero," an original opera written by Rosalinda Verde and co-directed by the company's musical director, Elisha Wilson, and musical director of Mariachi de Uclatlán, Miguel Pasillas.

It was the world's first mariachi opera, a San Diego Opera production, "A Cruzar la Cara de la Luna," that inspired Verde to apply for a Fresno Regional Foundation grant to create a mariachi opera.

"I cannot express what the San Diego Opera house felt like after the curtain fell," Verde said. "The audience leapt to its feet, crying and applauding. Their opera told an immigrant's story, and it touched so many, the connection to the message and the characters was palpable. You knew every person in that audience had their own version; their own narrative that they carried in their heart. Mariachi Vargas inspired the world to blend these two art forms together, the art of opera and mariachi."

The mariachi group accompanying the opera hails from UCLA. The group Mariachi de Uclatlán is directed by Redwood High School alum Miguel Pasillas.

The story line for "El Bracero" recounts the time of the bracero program, which allowed Mexican nationals to take temporary agricultural work in the United States. Over the program's 22-year life, more than 4.5 million Mexican nationals were legally contracted for work in the U.S., taking jobs at wages scorned by most Americans. The entire piece is based on true stories of family and friends of Verde.

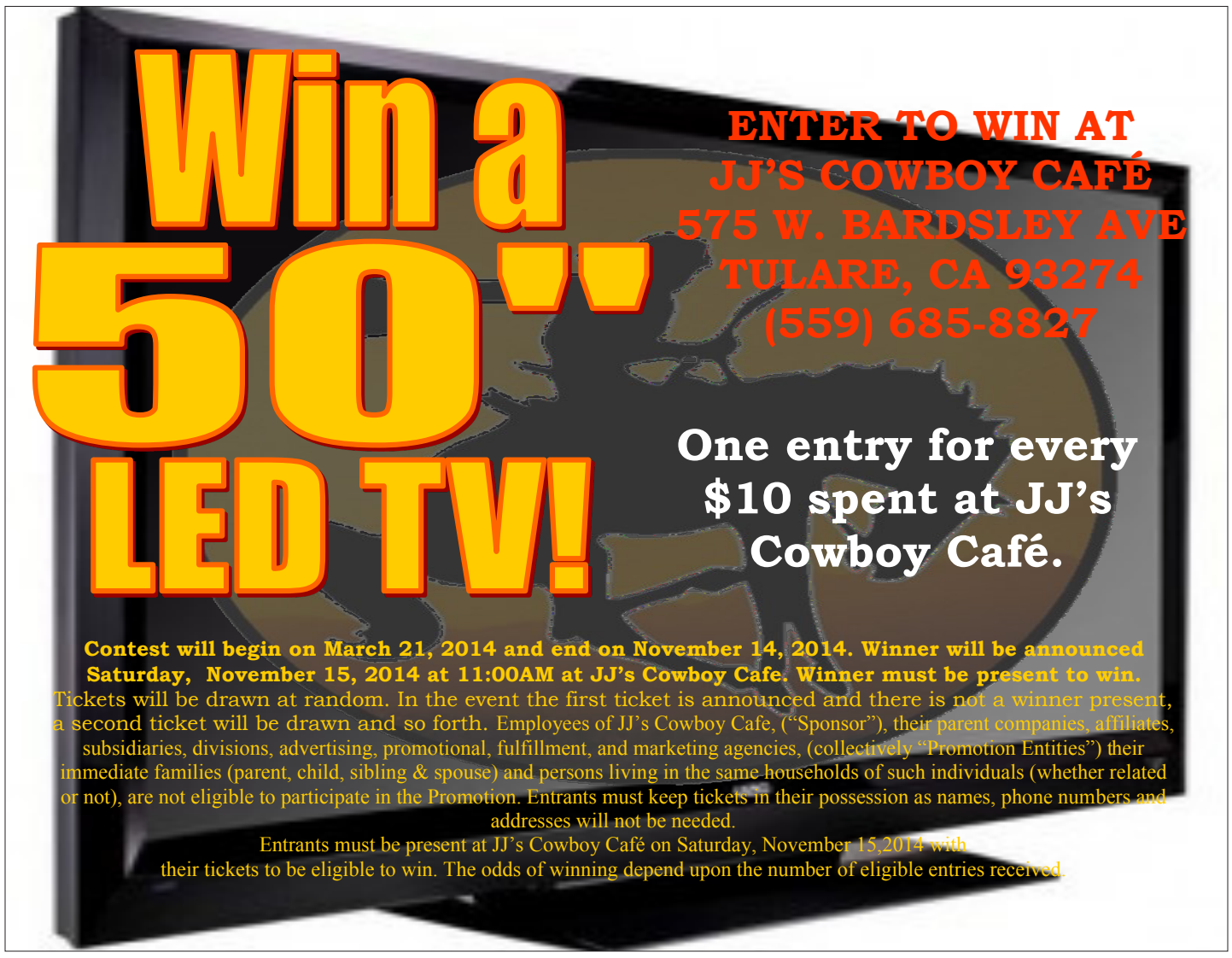
"My grandfather was badly burnt in a gas station accident," said Verde. "Because he was so severely injured and melted, my grandfather sent his children out to the fields to make a living. My mom's grandfather was a manager of the field workers; he had a huge heart and always gave to the men who worked in the camp. My friend Noelvia's father was a bracero, and the inspiration for the story. He fell in love at first sight and came to the United States to make a living so he could support the love of his life."

These stories are not just the stories of immigrants from Mexico. Families unite us, miracles happen, and love overcomes all.

The opera is accompanied with translations, and Ballet Folklorico Oro de Mexico will perform. Events will start at 11am with face painting, live interactive art provided by the Urbanist Artist Collective, youth games by Pro Youth Heart and free menudo for the first 100 guests.

That evening, VOC singers and Mariachi Azul de Acero will present a concert at the Cellar Door from 6:30-9:30pm. All ages are welcome. Tickets are $12 and available at ticketweb.com. For more information, call 627-6825.

NEXT DEADLINE:
13 NOVEMBER, 2014



Budweiser

MUSIC

Nov. 6, 13, 20, 27 – South 65 Country Rock Band – 8pm-12:30am
South 65 will perform every Thursday night at the Republik Lounge & Nightclub, 115 N. Locust St., Visalia. For information, visit facebook.com/RepublikLoungeNightclub.

Nov. 7 – The Backroad Band – 8-10pm
The Backroad Band, featuring funk and grove, will play at Farmer's Fury in Lemoore. For information, visit farmersfurywines.com.

Nov. 8 – Visalia Concerts in the Park – 3-5pm
Five Live will perform at Lions Park as part of Visalia's Concert in the Park Series. The events are free. For information, call 713-4365.

Nov. 8 – Jeffrey Lewis – 6pm
Jeffrey Lewis, Emily Lacey and Andrew Kennewick will perform at Velouria Records, 109 E. Main St., Visalia. The concert is free and open to all ages.

Nov. 8 – Cheers Elephant– 8-10pm
Sound n' Vision Foundation will present Cheers Elephant and foot of feathers at The Cellar Door, 101 W. Main St., Visalia. Tickets for the 21+ concert are $5. For information, visit snvfoundation.org.

Nov. 13 – The Oh Hellos – 6pm
The Oh Hellos, internationally-independent, self-produced music makings siblings will perform a unique mixture of eclectic folk Rock at Radiant Church, 515 E Center Ave., Visalia. Tickets are $12.50 and available at the church or ticketfly.com.

Nov. 14 – Twin Peaks – 7-9pm
Twin Peaks will perform with special guests at the Cellar Door, 101 W. Main St., Visalia. Tickets for the all-ages concert are $7 in advance, $10 on the night of the show.

Nov. 14 – Gentle Jaime– 9:30pm
Sound n' Vision Foundation will present Gentle Jaime and Zoe Lee Cooks at The Cellar Door, 101 W. Main St. Tickets for the 21+ concert are $5. For information, visit snvfoundation.org.

Nov. 15 – A Night of Mariachi – 6:30-9:30pm
Sound N Vision and the Visalia Opera Company present Noche de Bohemia featuring Mariachi Azul de Acero at The Cellar Door, 101 W. Main St. Tickets ($12) are available at Ticketweb.com. All ages welcome.

Nov. 15 – Katy Moffatt – 7pm
Katy Moffatt will perform at the Mavericks Coffee House in Visalia. Tickets are $25. Doors open at 6pm for this limited seating concert.

Nov. 15 – California Melody Boys – 7:30pm
The California Melody Boys, a Southern Gospel Music group, will perform at the Lindsay Community Theater, 190 N. Elmwood. Tickets, $10, available at lindsaycommunitytheater.com.

Nov. 21 – Karaoke – 6:30-8:30pm
Every Third Friday each month, Karaoke is featured at 210 Cafe. For information, call 739-9009.

Nov. 21 – Run4Cover – 9pm
Run4Cover will return to the Cellar Door, 101 W. Main Street, Visalia, for a 21+ concert. Tickets are $6. For information, visit cellardoor101.com.

Nov. 22 – Final Chords - 7:30pm
The Tulare County Symphony Orchestra November concert features Tchaikovsky's last symphony and Elgar's final concerto. The event will be held at the Visalia Fox Theatre. Tickets are $30 to $39.50 at the symphony office, 208 W. Main St., Suite D, Visalia. For information, visit tularecountysymphony.com.

Nov. 28 – Salsa Dance Lessons – 8-8:45pm
Free dance lessors are available with every $10 paid admission to Salsa dancing featuring Rumba 32, a collection of local music educators and professionals in the Visalia and Fresno area, at 210 Cafe in Visalia. For information, call 739-9009.

Nov. 28 – Salsa Dance featuring Rumba 32 – 9-11pm
Salsa dancing featuring Rumba 32, a collection of local music educators and professionals in the Visalia and Fresno area, will be held at 210 Cafe in Visalia. Salsa dancing is offered on the fourth Friday of each month, except December. For information, call 739-9009.

Nov. 28 – Mezcal- Turkey Hangover Party – 9:30pm
Sound n' Vision Foundation will present Mescal at The Cellar Door, 101 W. Main St. Tickets for the 21+ concert are $10. For information, visit snvfoundation.org.

Dec. 6 – Tulare County Symphony Orchestra Annual Holiday Concert – 3 & 7:30pm
More than 200 performers from throughout the county showcase talent with music for all ages at the Visalia Fox Theatre. For information, visit Facebook.com/tcsymphony.

Dec. 13 – Katy Moffatt – 7pm
Katy Moffat will perform at Mavericks Coffee House, 238 E. Caldwell, Visalia. For information, visit mavericksccoffeehouse.com.

Dec. 14 – Christmas Concert – 4 pm
Kings Symphony Orchestra brings back treasured memories of childhood and family in this holiday concert held at Hanford High Presentation Center. For information, visit kingssymphony.org.

Dec. 19 – The Chop Tops – 8pm
The Chop Tops will perform at The Cellar Door, 101 W. Main Street Visalia.

Jan. 10 – TCSO The Russia House – 7:30pm
Shostakovich: Piano Concerto No. 2 featuring pianist Steven Lin will be featured at Tulare County Symphony Orchestra performance "the Russia House." The evening closes with "Pictures at an Exhibition." TCSO performs at the Visalia Fox Theatre. For information, visit foxvisalia.org.

Jan. 17 – Mike Beck – 7pm
Mike Beck will perform at Mavericks Coffee House, 238 E. Caldwell, Visalia. For information, visit mavericksccoffeehouse.com.

Feb. 21 – Great Movies/Great Music – 7:30pm
Tulare County Symphony Orchestra's film series continues with music from spy films from James Bonds to Mission Impossible. The concert will be held at the Visalia Fox Theatre. For information, visit tularecountysymphony.com.

EVENTS

Nov. 6 – Business After Hours – 5:30-7:30pm
This week's Business After Hours program will be a joint mixer with Visalia and the Hispanic Chamber at Pine, Pedroncelli & Aguilar, 3924 W Caldwell Ave. Visalia.

Nov. 6 – Measure E Update Public Meeting – 6-8pm
Visalia Unified School District will host a public meeting to review its response to the delay and potential loss of matching funds from the state. The meeting will be held at the VUSD Board Room, 5000 W. Cypress Ave. For information, call 730-7300.

Nov. 7 & 18 – Senator Andy Vidak Mobile Office
A member of Senator Andy Vidak's staff will be available to assist with state related issues at three different locations: On Nov. 7 from 12:30-2:30pm at Pixley Branch Library, 300 N. School St.; On Nov. 7 from 12:30-3:30pm at Woodlake City Hall Council Chambers, 350 N. Valencia Blvd.; and on Nov. 18 from 3-5pm at Lemoore Branch Library, 457 C St. For information, call 585-7161 or email christine.caprelian@sen.ca.gov.

Nov. 7 – 12th Annual Farmworker Women's Health & Safety, Education and Environment Conference – 7am-4pm
Latinas in Business & Professions Association will hold the 2014 conference at the Tulare County Fairgrounds. The event is coordinated by Lali Mohen & Associates. For information, call 733-4121.

Nov. 7 – Soup and Sandwich Fundraiser – 11:30am-1pm
Corcoran Museum will hold a fundraiser luncheon. Cost, $10, includes soup, sandwiches, dessert and drink. It will be held at the Corcoran Veterans Memorial Building, 1000 Van Dorsten. Tickets can be purchased at the Corcoran Chamber of Commerce.

Nov. 7 – Veterans Resource Center Dedication Ceremony – 12:15-1pm
Porterville College will hold a dedication ceremony, tour, speakers and refreshments in the north side of the quad on the Porterville College Campus. For information, visit portervillecollege.edu.

Nov. 7 – How a Woman Ascended the Throne of Ancient Egypt – 7-8pm
As part of the Porterville College Cultural and Historical Awareness Program (C.H.A.P.), Egyptologist Kara Cooney of UCLA will present a free talk on Hatshepsut, the longest-reigning female pharaoh at Porterville College Theater. For information, visit www.portervillecollege.edu.

Nov. 8 – Donuts and Discussion – 8-9:30am
Enjoy Donuts and Discussion with Visalia Vice Mayor Warren Gubler from 8-9:30 am on the second Saturday of each month. For information, visit facebook.com/pages/City-of-Visalia-CA/193880147346796

Nov. 8 – 2nd Annual Veterans Day Parade – 10am-1pm
In honor of those who served, a Veterans Day Parade will be held on Main Street in Visalia. Bands, floats and celebrities will be featured.

Nov. 8 – Chili Cook-off – 10am-4pm
A Chili Cook-off, sponsored by The Stag, will be held at F & Pine Streets in Exeter. For information, call 592-7177 or 592-1648.

Nov. 9 – Women in Business – 12-1:30pm
Exeter Chamber of Commerce will host its Women in Business Networking event at East Meet West, 224 N. Kaweah Ave. Tickets are $15 in advance or $20 at the door. Lunch, program, networking and prizes are included. For information, call the Exeter Chamber at 592-2919.

Nov. 8 – Comedy Jam with Brad Williams and Friends – 8pm
Brad Williams, Patrick Deguirre, Johnny Osburn and Jesus Sepulvedy will be at the Visalia Fox. Tickets, $20-$25, available at foxvisalia.org.

Nov. 10 – Panel of Local Veterans – 11:30am-12:30pm
In honor of Veterans Day, a panel of local veterans will discuss and answer questions regarding personal experiences and perspectives pertaining to their time in the military service at Porterville College Theater. This event is free. The program is sponsored by the Porterville College Cultural and Historical Awareness Program (C.H.A.P.). For information, visit www.portervillecollege.edu.

Nov. 11 – Veterans Day Run – 7am
Downtown Porterville will host a 10K, 5K Run, 5K Walk and Kids' Fun Run. Pre-register at the Heritage Center, 256 E Orange Ave., or between 6am- 6:30am the day of the event. (No registration will be taken after 6:30am.)

Nov. 11 – 2nd Annual Veterans Day Parade – 6pm
American Legion Post 100 is sponsoring the Veterans Day Parade in downtown Lemoore. For information, call 909-5299.

Nov. 11 – Let's Fiesta – 6pm
Ruiz for Kids will have a fundraiser at Visalia Convention Center to benefit CASA of Tulare County, Dinuba High School, Miracle League of Visalia and Wish Upon a Star. The 2014 Danza Awardee Fred R. Ruiz will also be honored. Last year, Ruiz 4 Kids Fiesta awarded $352,189 to local organizations providing services to Central Valley children. For information, visit ruiz4kids.org.

Nov. 13 – Redefine Possible – 10am-3pm
Advanced Micro Systems will present a Lunch and Learn session on storage and data protection at the Visalia Convention Center. Admission is free, but reservations are required. For information, visit advancedmicrosystems.net.

Nov. 13 – Young Professionals Series – 6-8pm
The Young Professionals Network Visalia will host Nathan Halls of Sincerest Bank at Brandman University, 659 S. County Center. Halls will speak on creating partnerships with community groups. Reservations can be made by calling 734-5876.

Nov. 14 – Entry Deadline for Hanford Christmas Parade
The Hanford Chamber of Commerce will accept entry applications through Nov. 14 for those who wish to participate in the Hanford Christmas parade. The parade will be Nov. 28 at 6pm. For entry forms, visit handfordchristmas.org.

Nov. 14-15 – Micro Sprints - 5:30pm

EVENT CALENDAR

Microsprint racing at Plaza Park Raceway, 700 S. Plaza Dr., Visalia. For information, visit plazaparkraceway.com.

Nov. 15 – EFAMilies 2nd Annual Veteran's Benefit Run/Walk 5k-10k – 7-11am
American Legion Post #94 EFAMilies will raise funds for ASDEC (Assistance Service Dog Educational Center) to assist local veterans suffering from PTSD in the purchase of specially trained service dogs. Registration is $45, $25 for active-duty military and free for veterans. The Run/Walk will be held at Exeter City Park. For information, visit facebook.com/events/1458173707795455.

Nov. 15 – Family History Fair - 8:30am-3pm
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints will host a free Family History Fair at its church building at 650 N. Lovers Lane, Visalia. This event includes a keynote speaker and genealogy workshops. Pre-register at tinyurl.com/kufpmgq.

Nov. 15 – Turkey Toss – 9am-1pm
Visalia Sonic Drive Thru has partnered with Visalia Rescue Mission to help feed those in need during the holiday season. A turkey toss, prizes and turkey donations will be featured. For information, call 651-4111.

Nov 15 – J'adore Paris - A Ladies-Only Soiree
Elite Performance will host a women in business networking event featuring Parisian fun and festivities for women 18 and older at their Lemoore location, 325 E St. Tickets are $25 or $100 for a table of 5. For information, call 816-9351.

Nov. 15 – 25th Annual Holiday Stroll – 3-8pm
Downtown Lemoore Merchants Association and the Lemoore Chamber of Commerce will hold its holiday stroll featuring holiday entertainment, festive decorations, window decorating contest, unique gift ideas and photos with Santa (from 4-6pm). For information, call 924-6401.

Nov. 16 – New Earth Expo – 10am-6pm
Presentations on channeled messages and healing, unique gifts, free presentations and vendors will be featured at Visalia Fox, 300 W. Main St. Cost is $10, $5 for seniors and teens and free for children. Free passes are available at newearthexpo.net.

Nov. 18-20 – Advances in Pistachio Production
University of California Cooperative Extension and the Fruit and Nut Research and Information Center are offering the three-day extension course, Advances in Pistachio Production at the Visalia Convention Center. Enroll online at ucanr.edu/survey/survey.cfm?surveynumber=13178.

Nov. 18 – Nothing Changes, If Nothing Changes – 11am-1pm
The Society for Human Resource Management of Tulare/Kings County will meet at the Visalia Holiday Inn to hear a talk by Trisha Zulic, CM, SPHR. For information, visit shrmtularekings.org.

Nov. 18 – Business After Hours – 5:30-7:30pm
Visalia Chamber will hold its Business After Hours at Le Tip. For information, visit visaliachamber.org.

Nov. 20 – Visalia Business Academy – 9-10am
Visalia Chamber will host a talk on "Keeping Your Business Safe From Cyber Threats: at Brandman University Visalia Campus. For information, visit visaliachamber.org.

Nov 20 – Discipline and Termination Seminar –10-11:30am
Pacific Employers will offer a free seminar at Tulare-Kings Builders Exchange, 1223 S. Lover's Lane in Visalia. Reservations can be made by calling 733-4256.

Nov. 20 – – Young Professionals Series – 6-8pm
The Young Professionals Network Visalia will host Steve McDartha of True Legacy Consulting at Brandman University, 659 S. County Center. Reservations can be made by calling 734-5876.

Nov. 21 – 6th Annual Aquatini Shakedown – 6pm
California Water Alliance hosts local restaurants in a competition in creating the most coveted martini. In addition, there will be a live and silent auction along with music and food provided by the Vintage Press Restaurant. The event will be held at the Visalia Convention Center. For information, visit californiawateralliance.org.

Nov. 24 – Lemoore Christmas Parade Entry Deadline
Lemoore Chamber of Commerce will accept applications for entry in the Christmas Parade until Nov. 24 at 300 E. Street. For information, call 924-6401.

Nov. 27 – Race Against Hunger – Visalia Turkey Trot – 7:30am
The 10th Annual Race Against Hunger presented by Visalia Emergency Aid Council will be held in Downtown Visalia at Garden and Main streets. Proceeds for the 5K Run & 2 Mile Walk go to benefit the needy in the community. Registration and information available at veac.org.

Nov. 27 – Thanksgiving Community Dinner – 11am-3pm
Lemoore Senior Center will host a community dinner. For information, visit lemoorechamberofcommerce.com.

Nov. 28 – Canned Food Movie Drive – 1-2pm
A food drive for the Hanford Salvation Army will be held at Hanford Civic Auditorium, 400 N. Douty St. Entry Fee is 2 canned food items.

Nov. 28 – Hanford Christmas Parade – 6-7pm
The Hanford Chamber of Commerce, the City of Hanford, Hanford Sentinel and Family Health Care Network sponsor the Hanford Christmas Parade in downtown Hanford. For entry forms, visit handfordchristmas.org.

Nov. 29 – Salvation Army Angel Tree
The Salvation Army will host an Angel Tree at the Tulare Public Library for toy donations via the Friends of the Tulare Public Library and the Tulare Library Foundation. For information, visit tularepubliclibrary.org.

Nov. 30 – Lemoore Volunteer Fire Department Tree Raising – 11am-4pm

ART

Through November – Commemorating Italian Experiences in Tulare County – 12-4pm
The Tulare County Museum has launched a new exhibit in the History of Tulare County Farm Labor and Agriculture Museum. The museum is open Mondays, Thursdays and Fridays from 10am to 4pm and Saturday and Sundays from 12-4pm. Admission is free. The Tulare County Museum is located in Mooney Grove Park in Visalia. For information, call 733-6616.

Through Nov. 21 – Trio of Sculptors
The work of three sculptors will be on display at the Porterville College Art Gallery through November 21. Gallery hours are Monday through Thursday from 12-2 p.m. and 4-6 p.m. Contact the front desk for a free temporary parking permit.

Through Nov. 28 – Farmas - New Works by Rogelio Gutierrez
The works of Valley native Rogelio Gutierrez will be on display at Arts Visalia through Nov. 28. A reception will be held Nov. 7 from 6-8pm. Admission is free. For information, visit artsvisalia.org.

Through Nov. 30 – Hidden in the Leaves – 10am-6pm
Arts Alliance of Three Rivers will host its autumn exhibition at Sierra Subs & Salads Dining area. For information, visit facebook.com/artsallianceofthreerivers.

Through Jan. 3 – Paintings by Nadi Spencer
Paintings by Nadi Spencer are on display at the Tulare Historical Museum and Gallery. A reception for the Three-Rivers resident will be held at the Heritage Art Gallery Nov. 6 from 5-7pm. For information, visit tularehistoricalmuseum.org.

Nov. 7 – Porterville Art Walk – 5-8pm
On the first Friday of each month, a free self-guided tour of local artisans, galleries, art studios, museums and alternative art venues is featured. For information, visit portervilleartwalk.org.

Nov. 7 – Downtown Visalia's First Friday – 5:30-8:30pm
On the first Friday of each month, artists and businesses throughout Downtown Visalia come together to celebrate and share their art. For more information, visit theartsconsortium.org.

Nov. 7 – First Friday Artists Receptions – 5-8pm
Three artists receptions will be held during First Friday Visalia for Betty Berk celebrating her colorful oil paintings at Sue Sa's Clubhouse at 699 W. Center St, and Joy Collier at Suncrest Bank at 400 W. Center St. with images of the Sequoias, and Jeri Burzin showing an exhibit called "Double Take," which features an image twice though with different interpretations, at Michael's Jewelry on Main Street.

Nov. 7 – Hidden in the Leaves Artist Reception – 5:30-8pm
Local artists will celebrate the autumn in Three Rivers with an exhibit that will run to Nov. 30 at Arts Alliance of Three Rivers, 41717 Sierra Dr. An artist reception will be held Nov. 7. The event is sponsored by the Arts Alliance of Three Rivers and Sierra Subs and Salads.

Nov. 13 – Valley Oak Quilt Guild - 10am
Valley Oak Quilt Guild will meet at Tulare Community Church, 1820 N Gem. The challenge quilts for this year will be revealed. For information, visit www.valleyoakqg.org.

Nov. 14-16 – Open Air Peddler's Market
The market featuring antiques and collectibles is held at Tumbleweeds Antiques, 159 North B Street, Exeter, and at Exeter Treasures, 558 E. Palm. To reserve space or for information, call 592-1940 or 936-1487.

Nov. 15-16 – Holiday Boutique – 9am-3pm
Hanford Parks and Recreation will hold a boutique at Civic Center Park, Hanford. A variety of vendors, crafts, entertainment and a visit with Santa will be featured. For information, call 585-2525.

Nov. 15 – Three Rivers 29th Annual Holiday Arts & Crafts Bazaar – 9am-4pm
Handmade gifts, food, bake sale, auction and door prizes will be featured at the Three Rivers Senior League bazaar in the Three Rivers Memorial Building. For information, call 561-3461.

Nov. 15-16 – Holiday Marketplace Boutique - 10am-5pm
The Central Valley Women's Network will hold a boutique at the Visalia Convention Center to benefit the CVWN Scholarship Fund and Relay For Life. The event will be from 10am-5pm Nov. 15, and 10-4pm Nov. 16. Entrance is $5. Current military and immediate family will be admitted free. Coupons are available on the website centralvalleywomensnetwork.org.

Nov. 16 - Art on Fire
Artists are called upon to paint fire hydrants in Downtown Visalia. Painted Fire Hydrants will be on display through November 2016. For a map of painted hydrants, visit artsvisalia.org/Art%20on%20Fire.php.

Nov. 20 – The Creative Center's Annual Gift Faire – 5-7pm
A free Christmas boutique will be held at the Jon Ginsburg Gallery, 410 E. Race Ave. Visalia. Local restaurants and Creative Center supporters will provide soup, bread and desserts.

Nov. 20 – Holiday Ornament Crafts – 5pm
An adult holiday ornament craft class will be offered at the Tulare Public Library. For information, visit tularepubliclibrary.org.

Nov. 25 – Thanksgiving Bushel Basket Bouquet Class – 6:30-8pm
Ramblin Rose of Lemoore will offer a crafting class at 246 Heinlen St. Tickets, $50 must be paid in advance. For information, visit facebook.com/ramblinroselemoore.

Nov. 26 – Crafty Corner: Knit and Crochet Group – 10:30am-12pm
Learn and practice fiber arts on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month at Visalia Branch Library. For information, call 713-2703.

Nov. 28 – Holiday Craft Fair – 10am-4pm
Hanford's Holiday Craft and Vendor Fair will be held in Hanford Civic Park followed by the Hanford Christmas Parade. Booths are available. For information, visit hanfordchamber.com.

COMMUNITY

Through Dec. 9 – Lunch with Lewis – 12-1pm
Stephen & Diane Murray will lead a discussion of Mere Christianity by C.S. Lewis at 210 Cafe in Visalia. A material fee of $10 will be charged. A special lunch will be available for purchase during the sessions. For information, email maria@firstpresvisalia.org.

Nov 6-9 – Valley Oak Quilt Guild Retreat
The Valley Oak Guild will hold their retreat at Wonder Valley Ranch. For information, visit valleyoakqg.org.

Nov. 6 – Cancer is Dinner Talk – 5:30pm
On the first Thursday of each month, Kaweah Delta Health Care District hosts this support group at Sequoia Regional Cancer Center, 4945 W. Cypress Ave. For information, visit Kaweahdelta.org.

Nov. 6 – Visalia Diabetes Support Group – 5:30-7pm
The Kaweah Delta Health Care District support group meets on the first Thursday of each month at Kaweah Delta Multiservice Center, 402 W. Acequia. For information, visit Kaweahdelta.org.

Nov. 6 – Sleep Apnea Presentation – 6:30-7:30pm
Evolutions Fitness and Wellness Center will host a free presentation on sleep apnea and a solution that is providing relief to sleep apnea sufferers at Evolutions, 1425 E. Prosperity, Tulare. For information, call 686-0078.

Nov. 7 – Visalia City Employees Blood Drive – 9am-1pm
A Central Valley Blood Drive will be held at City Hall West, 707 W. Acequia. For information, email dsilvera@donateblood.org.

Nov. 7 – Central Valley Parkinson Support Group – 10:30am
The group will meet in the pre-school center of Visalia United Methodist Church, 5200 W. Caldwell.

Nov. 7 – First Friday with a Physician – 12–1:30pm
On the first Friday of each month, Adventist Medical Center in Hanford hosts a physician seminar series. For information, call 589-2032.

Nov. 7 & 21 – Couponing – 3-5pm
The Visalia Branch Library will offer classes on Stretching the Food Dollar every other Friday in the Blue Room. Registration is not required.

Nov. 7 – The Woman Who Would Be King – 7-8pm
Porterville College's Cultural Historical Awareness Program (C.H.A.P.) presents a special talk on "Hatshepsut: How a Woman Ascended the Throne of Ancient Egypt" in the PC Theater. The event is free. For information visit portervillecollege.edu or call 791-2200.

Nov. 7 – Candles of Care – 4pm
Prestige Assisted Living will light candles to remember and honor individuals of Alzheimer's disease and their families as part of a national commemorative candle lighting. The center is located at 3120 W. Caldwell, Visalia.

Nov. 8 – Walk with a Doc – 8-9am
Healthy Visalia Committee holds its "Just Walk" program at Riverway Sports Park, 3611 N. Dinuba Blvd., every second Saturday of the month through December. The free program requires no pre-registration. During the walk, a healthy topic is presented and snacks are provided. For information, visit walkwithadoc.org.

Nov. 8 – Second Saturday Book Club – 11am – noon
The club will discuss various banned books in celebration of banned book month. The club meets in the Charter Room of the Tulare Public Library, 475 North M St. To register for book clubs, call 685-4503 or stop by the research and information desk.

Nov. 8 – 8th Annual Salute to Veterans Banquet – 5-8pm
Corcoran High School Air Force Jr. ROTC hosts Corcoran Veterans and families at the Technology Learning Center, Whitley & Dairy Avenue.

Nov. 8 – Lemoore Rotary Crab Feed – 6-10pm
The 34th annual Lemoore Rotary Crab feed will feature silent and live auctions, no host bar and crab dinner at 711 W. Cinnamon Drive. For tickets, $50, leave a message at 925-1211.

Nov. 8 – Scarecrow Ball – 6-10:30pm
Visalia Smooth Dancers will hold an evening of ballroom dancing at Exeter Memorial Building, 324 N. Kaweah. Eileen Chavez will offer lessons at 6pm. Potluck dinner at 7pm and general dancing follows from 8 to 10:30pm. State Convention winners will also perform. Tickets are $10 with a main dish and $18 for guests. For information, call 686-9786 or 688-0302.

Nov. 9 – Second Sunday Seminars – 2-3pm
The Sarah Mooney Museum features seminars on the second Sunday every month. The programs focus on specific elements of turn-of-the-century life in the Lemoore/Kings County area. Luiz Rodriguez will discuss the life and workings of the Victor Victrola Company. The museum, located at 542 W. D Street in Lemoore, is open every Sunday afternoon from 12-3pm for docent-led tours and special activities. For information, visit sarahamooneymuseum.com.

Nov. 11 – Elbow Creek 4H Club Blood Drive – 7:30-11am
A blood drive will be held at Elbow Creek Grange Hall, 13781 Ave. 328, Visalia. For information, visit donateblood.org.

Nov. 11 – Battle of the Badges – 4-8pm
The 13th Annual Battle of the Badges South Valley Blood Drive features a competition between the Valley's finest. Lemoore Police Department and Volunteer Fire Department will have a blood drive at Lemoore Civic Auditorium 435 C St. Donors receive a commemorative t-shirt and reward coupons. For information, call 288-6319.

Nov. 11 – Exeter Friends of the Library – 7pm
The Exeter Friends of the Library meets on the second Tuesday each month at the Exeter Branch Library, 230 E. Chestnut.

Nov. 12, 19 & 26 – Medicare Extra Help – 1-4pm
Every Wednesday, Tulare Senior Center offers free counseling for Medicare beneficiaries. Help with prescription plans, claims, appeals and general information. This program is sponsored by Kings/Tulare AAA HICAP. Appointments available by calling 623-0199.

Nov. 12 & 26 – The Knitting Club – 5:30pm
The Tulare Public Library knitting club meets every other Wednesday in the Olympic Room.

Nov. 13 – Garden Club Meeting – 9:30am
The Tulare Garden Club will meet at the Tulare Museum's Heritage Art Gallery. For information, visit tularehistoricalmuseum.org.

Nov. 13 – Grant Proposal Writing Basics – 2pm
The Tulare Public Library will offer a free computer class on grant writing. For information, visit tularepubliclibrary.org.

Nov. 13 – Tulare Kings Mensa – 5:30pm
Tulare Kings Mensa, the South Valley's high IQ society, will meet at Panera Bread, 4103 S. Mooney Blvd., Visalia, at 5:30 p.m. Prospective members are welcome.

Nov. 13 & 27 – Oakland Raiders Boosters Meeting – 7pm
Tulare Kings Counties Oakland Raiders Boosters meet on the second and fourth Thursdays each month at Elks Lodge, 3100 W. Main St., Visalia.

Nov. 14 – Veterans and Senior Breakfast – 7:30-9am
A breakfast will be held in honor of Veterans at Lemoore Veterans Memorial Bldg.

Nov. 14 – Graphic Novel Club – 4-5pm
The Graphic Novel Club will meet at the Tulare Public Library in the Olympic Room. The group meets on the second Friday of each month. For information, call 685-4500.

Nov. 14-15 – Discover the Treasures of Jesus with Ray Vander Laan – 6:30pm
Ray Vander Laan brings the Bible to life in a two-day session at Visalia Fox Theatre. Tickets, $25, available at foxvisalia.org.

Nov. 14 – Recovery and Identification of U.S. Missing-In-Action Personnel – 7-8pm
Porterville College's Cultural Historical Awareness Program (C.H.A.P.) hosts Deputy Laboratory Director of the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command, Central Identification Laboratory in Honolulu, Dr. William Belcher in the PC Theater. The event is free. Parking permits will not be required for the event. For information visit portervillecollege.edu or call 791-2200.

Nov. 15 – Tulare Kings Writers – 10am-noon
"Confronting Historical Controversy – Its Risks and Rewards: My Varied Encounters with Tulare County's Colorful Past," a talk by author Newell Bringhurst, will highlight this meeting in the Blue Room of the Visalia Branch Library. Admission is free. Info: 280-9774.

Nov. 15 – Loudmouth Poetry Jam – 3-4pm
Visalia Branch Library will host the Loudmouth Poetry Jam in the Blue Room. For information, call 733-1229.

Nov. 15 – Crab Feed – 7:30pm
Sociedade De Sao Joao-St. John's Society will hold a fundraiser at St. John's Hall in Hanford. Tickets, $65, must be purchased in advanced. For information, call 381-4468.

Nov 15 – Hanford High Dugout Club Horseshoe Tournament
Horseshoe Tournament at Kings County Fairgrounds, Hanford. Tickets are $50 per team (2 per team). Prizes, raffle, and concessions. For information, call 904-8958.

Nov. 15-Dec. 20 – Food For Fines
Tulare Public Library will forgive fines for donated non-perishable food and jackets. All items will be given to Tulare Emergency Aid Council. For information, call 685-4502.

Nov. 15 – A&W Cruise Night – 8-9pm
Every third Saturday each month, it's A&W Cruise Night featuring vintage cars. For information, call 625-1513.

Nov. 16 – Presbyterian Church of Three Rivers 75th Anniversary Celebration – 10:30am
Presbyterian Church of Three Rivers will celebrate with a day of worship, memories, music, potluck, games and more. The celebration begins immediately following church services. The church is located at 4341 Sierra Drive. Reservations are requested. For information, call 561-3385.

Nov. 16 – PFLAG Meeting – 3-5pm
Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays Tulare & Kings County meets on the third Sunday each month at the Educational and Cultural Center, Congregation B'nai David, 1039 S. Chinowth, Visalia. For information, visit www.pflag-tulare-kings.org.

Nov. 17 – Parenting Classes – 5-7pm
Family HealthCare Network offers a 6-week course on parenting. For information and enrollment, call 1-877-960-3426.

Nov. 18 – Alzheimer's Disease Seminar – 10:30am
Prestige Assisted Living at Visalia will host "Managing Challenging Behaviors" at 3120 W Caldwell Ave. The guest speaker will be David Troxel. For information, call 735-0828.

Nov. 18, 25 – NaNoWriMo Write In – 12-3pm
Visalia Branch Library will hold a write-in to participate in the NaNoWriMo.org campaign, a part of National Novel Writing Month. For information, call 731-2723.

Nov. 19 – Spinal Cord Injury Support Group – 6:30-7:30pm
The Spinal Cord Injury Support Group meets on the third Wednesday of each month at Kaweah Delta Rehabilitation Hospital, 840 S. Akers St. For information, visit KaweahDelta.org.

Nov. 19 – Mystery Readers Book Club – 6:30-8pm
The book club will meets on the third Wednesday of each month at the Visalia Branch Library, 200 W. Oak St. For information, call 713-2709.

THEATER

Nov. 10 – Movie Night at the Barn – 6pm
"How to Train Your Dragon 2" will be featured at McKellar Family Farms, 32985 Road 164, Ivanhoe. Bring blankets or lawn chairs. Admission is free. For information, visit mckellarfamilyfarms.com.

Nov. 12 – Meet Me in St. Louis – 2pm
The Tulare Public Library will feature a free showing of the movie "Meet Me In St. Louis." For information, visit tularepubliclibrary.org.

Nov. 14-30 – Side By Side By Sondheim
Visalia Players Theater Company presents this tribute to composer-lyricist Stephen Sondheim at the Ice House Theater, 410 E Race Ave., Visalia. Matinees will be held at 2pm Nov. 16, 23 &30. Evening performances will be held Nov. 14, 15, 21, 22, 28 & 29 at 7:30pm. For tickets and information, visit visaliaplayers.org.

Nov. 14 – "Maleficent" – 5pm
The Tulare Public Library will feature a free showing of the movie "Maleficent." For information, visit tularepubliclibrary.org.

Nov 21-23, 30 & Dec. 6-7 – Kings Players - A Redneck Christmas Carol
The Kings Players present "A Redneck Christmas Carol" at the Temple Theater, 514 Visalia St., Hanford.

Nov. 22 – Comedy Slam – 8pm
Lindsay Chamber of Commerce presents a comedy show and dance party at McDermont Field House. Tickets for the 21+ show are $15 at the door. For pre-sale tickets, $10, call 562-4929.

Nov. 26 – A Christmas Story – 2pm
The Tulare Public Library will feature a free showing of the movie "A Christmas Story." For information, visit tularepubliclibrary.org.

Dec. 4-14 – Pedro, the Angel of Olivera Street
The Enchanted Playhouse presents the story of Pedro, a young boy with the voice of an angel who wishes to restore traditional Christmas celebrations. The play will be held on Friday and Saturday at 7pm, and Sunday at 2pm at Main Street Theatre, 307 E. Main, Visalia. Tickets are $8 and $5 for matinees. For information, visit enchantedplayhouse.org.

Jan. 9-25 – The 39 Steps – 7:30pm
Visalia Players Theater Company presents "The 39 Steps," a fast-paced whodunit at the Ice House Theater, 410 E Race Ave., Visalia. Matinees will be held at 2pm Jan. 11, 18 & 25. Evening performances will be Jan. 9, 10, 16, 17, 23 & 24 at 7:30pm. For tickets and information, visit visaliaplayers.org.

Arts Visalia Presents 'FARMAS: New Works by Rogelio Gutierrez' through November

Kevin Bowman

Every community takes pride in those young people who have roots in that community, attended school there, and then went on to significant achievements in their professional lives. Their stories serve as inspiration to future generations and serve as a reminder that when we talk in general about all of the talented people in our community, that we are not just speaking in empty clichés. In this spirit, Arts Visalia Visual Art Center is proud to present "FARMAS: New Work by Rogelio Gutierrez," an exhibition which will be on display at Arts Visalia through the month of November.

Born in San Jose and raised in Farmersville, Gutierrez is one of those individuals to which the preceding statement truly applies. A College of the Sequoias alumnus, he went on to receive a bachelor of fine arts in printmaking from California State University, Long Beach followed by a Master of Fine Arts in Visual Art and Public Life from Indiana University's Herron School of Art and Design.

Noting that he drew much of the inspiration for this exhibition from his time growing up in the Central Valley, the works in this exhibition are a culmination of images and objects that connect people culturally, despite their physical and political separations. While inspired by the personal experiences of a Mexican-American, the exhibition is equally relatable to both the experiences of many native Mexicans and natives of the United States alike. Through a series of photographic prints and sculptural works representing iconographic symbols from his life, Gutierrez explores the idea that one's culture is not solely defined by their nationality.

As a printmaker, Gutierrez is well versed in traditional methods of making art, yet he often uses materials and methods of presentation that are not traditionally associated with fine art so that he might engage the public on a broader basis. For example, in 2011 he created a series of images that were displayed on billboards throughout the city of Indianapolis. These billboards were strategically placed in high traffic areas as a temporary public art project that created a dialogue between the Latino population of Indianapolis and the community at large.

Gutierrez now holds the position of assistant professor of printmaking with a focus on Latino arts at the Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts, School of Art at Arizona State University, where he is the current Evelyn Smith Endowed Professor of Art. His work has been featured in exhibitions at the International Print Center of New York, the 2012 Chicana/o Biennial in San Jose, and the Museum of Mexico City. After its debut at Arts Visalia, this exhibition will travel to Casa Siglo XIX Museo-Sebastian in Chihuahua, Mexico. More information about him and his work can be found at www.rogeliogutierrez.com.

"FARMAS: New Works by Rogelio Gutierrez" will be on display at Arts Visalia through November 28. A public reception will be held on the evening of Friday, November 7 from 6 to 8pm. At 7 pm during the reception, the artist will hold an informal artist talk for those in attendance. Admission to the exhibition and to the reception is free and open to the public. Special thanks to Jack and Charlie's restaurant for their generous support of this exhibition.

Arts Visalia Visual Art Center is located at 214 E. Oak Ave. in Downtown Visalia, and is open to the public Wednesday through Saturday from noon to 5:30pm. For more information on Arts Visalia's programs, visit www.artsvisalia.org or call 739-0905.

Kevin Bowman is the director of Arts Visalia and an instructor of art at College of the Sequoias.

Main Street Gallery Artists Celebrate Art and the Holidays

Jeri Burzin

The holiday season is a perfect time for Main Gallery artists to celebrate our art and to recognize our wonderful supporters. The Arts Consortium is the umbrella organization for the arts in Tulare County, business owners Nancy and Michael Phelps of Michael's Jewelry, Sue Sa of Sue Sa's Clubhouse, and Nathan Hall and Barbra Hood from Suncrest Bank all provide wonderful venues for us to exhibit our work and gracious receptions for the artist and the community on First Fridays. And the *Valley Voice* and *Visalia Times-Delta* newspapers do their part by publishing and advertising our events.

The months of November and December find Betty Berk celebrating her colorful oil paintings at Sue Sa's Clubhouse at 699 W. Center St, and Joy Collier at Suncrest Bank at 400 W. Center St. with her beautiful images of the Sequoias. I am showing at Michael's Jewelry on Main Street with an exhibit called "Double Take," which features an image twice though with different interpretations. It may be a photograph taken during different seasons, as with The Three Graces and Half Dome, or from different perspectives and/or with mixed media as with the poppies, the Ghost Ranch images, or with the Cinque Terre in Italy. The exhibits will be open during the First Friday receptions on November 7, between 5-8pm.

Karl Merhten, owner of Café 225, has also been a wonderful supporter of the arts and probably the first Visalia business owner to have local artists show their work at his restaurant. He has hosted many exhibits and has provided beautiful receptions for the community for many years and this holiday season is no exception. Main Gallery artists Elsah Cort, Toni Best, Deanna Saldana, Beckie Nava, Deborah Nolan, Lynn Ramires, Betty Berk, Joy Collier, Laurie Gorman, Ginny Wilson and I will have a group show at Café 225 from November 16 to January 18. The theme of this exhibit is "Celebration" which will be an opportunity to see how the artists interpret this theme through their work.

Lynn Ramires' painting of French Chateau was given to a friend who 'celebrated' her daughter's college graduation and who took cooking classes in the chateau. Joy Collier's painting of "Our Nation's Christmas Tree" celebrates the holiday season in the snow. Beckie Nava finds the sunset hour to be the most celebratory time of day with her photo of "Sundown Celebration at Pismo Beach." Deb Nolan celebrates the beauty of the natural world with her image of "Perfection." Toni Best, gourd and basket weaver, says, "Every piece becomes a celebration of ideas, joy in movement and shape, and a gift of myself to the viewers."

Jeri Burzin's "Half Dome"

Betty Berk indicates that her oil paintings help to show "her close bond with the landscape and animals that thrive here and to celebrate their life." Laurie Gorman celebrates the beautiful colors of the oranges, grapes and bird of paradise that grow here with her watercolors.

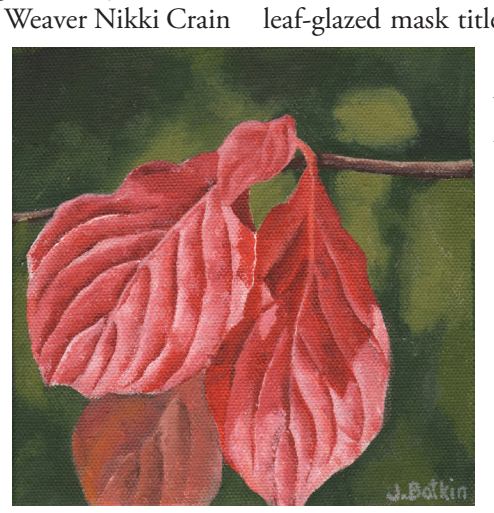
Photographer Ginny Wilson says, "For me, the very existence of light is a cause for celebration, especially if the light touches something beautiful." Deanna Saldana's oil paintings revolve around creation, "We have to celebrate the planet, its beauty, and our role as caretakers." Finally, my mixed media images revolve around the celebration of food that is part of every celebration, particularly fruits and vegetables and their beautiful colors.

The public is invited to the reception at Café 225 on Sunday, November 23, between 2-5pm. Please help us celebrate the holidays, enjoy the art, talk with the artists, and perhaps find an original gift to celebrate that special someone or event.

'Hidden in the Leaves' Exhibit Brings Bounty of Artistry to Three Rivers

A brisk morning, colorful leaves, a whiff of the first warming fire in the hearth and the hope of winter storms moves artists toward paint brushes, cameras, clay and more. The Arts Alliance of Three Rivers shares this bounty of artistry at its autumn 2014 exhibition, "Hidden in the Leaves."

Visitors will experience a diverse range of artwork. A sampling of these includes accomplished photographer Virginia Wilson's vivid nature photographs that capture Yosemite's peaceful grandeur at the change of seasons. Christine Sell-Porter's brilliantly hued oil paintings depict rustic country scenes in fall. Jana Botkin, also painting in oils, shares botanical style renderings that typify the unique beauty of autumn leaves. Marn Reich, well known clay artist, takes a different turn, painting with acrylics in her entry, "The Shrine." Weaver Nikki Crain offers a seasonal handwoven runner and also shows off her pencil drawing talent with "Acorns and Leaves." Deborah Dal Zuffo's delicate watercolor butterfly caught fluttering among autumn leaves is a lively tribute to the changing season.



"Leaf XV," oil on canvas by Jana Botkin.

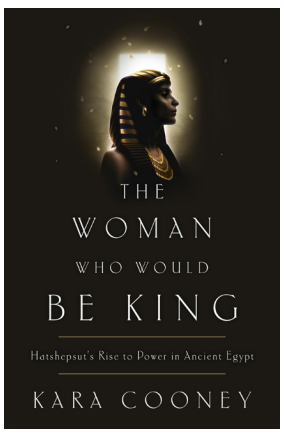
Other samples of the fine work in the show include Shirley Keller's whimsical take on our beloved local hummingbirds in her leaf-glazed mask titled "Hummer in the Leaves." Clay artist Ann Bowen also joins the show with her clay renderings of leaves that can be hung for decorative beauty or used as beautiful plates. Clay plays another role in the two new clay monoprints created by Karen Kimball, featuring bright fall leaves and trees. Several other well- known local artists are joining the event and the gallery walls will be filled with artful treasures.

The artists' reception, from 5:30-8:30pm on November 7, provides an opportunity to meet the artists, enjoy food prepared by Allison and Dane from Sierra Subs & Salads, and relax to the piano melodies by Ken Elias and Megan Jo Doyle.

"Hidden in the Leaves" runs through November 30 at the Sierra Subs & Salads dining area, (formerly the Art Co-op), 41717 Sierra Dr. in Three Rivers. Hours are 10am to 6pm Tuesday-Saturday, 10am to 5pm Sunday.

Porterville College C.H.A.P. Draws Famed Egyptologist Dr. Kara Cooney

Porterville College's Cultural Historical Awareness Program (C.H.A.P.) fall schedule continues on Friday, November 7 when famed author, TV personality (Discovery Channel's "Out of Egypt"), Egyptologist and associate professor of Near Eastern languages and cultures at UCLA, Dr. Kara Cooney, will present a talk on "Hatshepsut: How a Woman Ascended the Throne of Ancient Egypt."



While many are familiar with the stories of Cleopatra and Nefertiti, perhaps the most powerful woman in ancient Egypt was Hatshepsut – the longest-reigning female pharaoh and a woman we hardly remember today. In this presentation, guests will learn about Hatshepsut's rise to power as Cooney paints a compelling and modern portrait of her life, the efforts decades later to erase the evidence of her reign and the modern struggles to understand her life and the place of women in the ancient world.

The talk will take place from 7-8pm in the PC Theater. The event is open to the public and free to attend. Parking permits will not be required for the event.

Porterville College is located at 100 E. College Ave. in Porterville. For more information, visit www.portervillecollege.edu or call 791-2200.

California Melody Boys to Perform Southern Gospel in Lindsay

Southern gospel music is coming to the South Valley on November 15 when the California Melody Boys headline a 7:30pm show at the Lindsay Community Theater, 190 N. Elmwood, in Downtown Lindsay.

The California Melody Boys

The California Melody Boys started in February of 2003 and soon became dedicated members of the Central California Southern Gospel Music Association and the Western States Gospel Music Association. Not too long after their induction into those organizations they were regular participants of the Great Western Southern Gospel Fan Festival.

CMB focuses on delivery of the gospel of Jesus Christ through southern style harmonies. The group is David Donald (tenor), Larry Martin (lead) and Mark Taylor (baritone).

Tickets are $10 and available at lindsaycommunitytheater.com. For more information call 284-2223.

Trio of Sculptors on Display at Porterville College

The public is invited to see the exhibition "Three Sculptors" through November 21 at the Porterville College Art Gallery. The show features the work of sculptors Richard Arenas, Carol Clum and Mike Perez.

Arenas is from a Campesino family from Mexico, but was born and raised in Tulare. Having worked the fields throughout California, he feels strongly about social and economic rights for all. He believes in preserving the indigenous history and culture of all people through the arts.

"Deep Sea Creature," by Carol Clum.

"My personal goal is to immortalize the Campesino, the people of pre-Columbian Mexico, and indigenous people of the world," said Arenas, who has received many awards for his art and community involvement including the "Local Hero of the Year Award" from Valley Public Television and induction into the College of the Sequoias Hall of Fame.

"The laborious nature of the work behind each piece reflects the very nature of the repetitive and back-breaking work of the farm laborer," said Arenas. "Each sculpture is made up of dozens upon dozens of small hand cut pieces of leather, metal and wood, assembled into beautifully patterned figures."

Clum was born in Washington, D.C., graduated from George Washington University and worked as a computer programmer for 13 years for the U.S. Navy. She wrote programs managing radio frequencies, tracking Russian nuclear submarines and facilitating search and rescue missions.

"My entire life I've enjoyed looking at and creating art in pen and ink, pastels, embroidery and quilting," said Clum. "When I discovered clay, I was hooked. All other media were abandoned. Later, I pursued found-object art as well as clay sculpture. I love the search for costume jewelry, kitchen utensils, tools, electrical parts and machine parts and the process of selecting the right parts for each sculpture."

Perez was born in Los Angeles and has been involved in artistic pursuits from a very young age. As a result of his artistic passion and academic proficiency in high school, he was awarded a four-year California State Scholarship, which allowed him to attend, and graduate from, California College of Arts and Crafts with a degree in printmaking and graphic design.

In the mid 1980's, Perez was employed in the aerospace industry as a digital software illustrator for flight simulators, and during this period became interested in sculpture. He particularly favored the cutting and welding of various metals, primarily steel, though he still works in other sculptural media, such as making rustic furniture using woods of the western Sierra Nevada or, as he says, "My 35-year love affair with telephone wire." Perez's artworks in the exhibition are made of steel that has been cut, forged and welded.

The Porterville College Art Gallery is located on campus at 100 E. College Ave. in Porterville. Gallery hours are Monday through Thursday from noon to 2pm and 4-6pm.